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THE
CASTLE OF CAITHNESS.

A Romance of the Thirteenth Century.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By F. H. P.

“ Oh answer me !

“ Let me not burst in ignorance ! but tell,

“ Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,

“ Have burst their cerements !”

SHAKESPEARE,

VOL. I.

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THE
CASTLE OF CAITHNESS.

CHAP. I.

“ What struggling passions rule the soul,
“ What passions fierce that spurn controul,
 “ The human bosom fire !
“ The potent warrior cas'd in steel,
“ The King, the beggar, all can feel
 “ The power of strong desire !”

JUVENILIA.

GLENCAIRN, the Baron of Caithness,
and Laird of one of the most numerous
clans in Scotland, was descended from a

VOL. I.

B

noble

noble race of ancestors, whose virtues in him seemed hereditary. - Brave, beneficent, and hospitable, he commanded the esteem and respect of all around him, and his vassals owned him with pride for their Chief.

Blessed with the company of the lovely partner of his affections, who had borne him an infant son, heir to his vast domains, he resided at the Castle of Caithness, surrounded by his faithful domestics, whose attachment to him, while it evinced their own fidelity, filled the bosom of the Baron with sensations of the purest delight.

Festivity reigned in the Castle; the day was spent in the tilt and the tournament, while the minstrels sang the achievements of their Lord. But
these

these days of joy were not to last for ever; a fatal reverse was fast arising, and the black clouds of adversity hung lowering over the towers of Caithness.

Macmillan, the brother of the Baron, had a mind capable of conceiving the deepest villany, and sufficient cunning to effect any villanous purpose when once planned. He had long viewed, with an eye of malignity and covetous desire, the rich possessions and happiness of his brother; while his comparatively small patrimony filled him with murmur and discontent. To obtain the Barony of Caithness had long been his object; but he still appeared far distant from the pleasure he portrayed to himself in the enjoyment of it. Fortune had hitherto favoured him. An elder brother had once stood

between him and the present Baron ; but he had suddenly disappeared, and it was generally supposed he had fallen a victim to the enmity of a Chief he had once offended.

The birth of an heir of Glencairn again troubled him, as it removed him a degree further from his expectations ; however, he had determined not to resign all hopes so easily, and in order to inspect affairs more closely, he paid a visit to his brother.

Glencairn received him with joy ; he introduced him to his Lady, and endeavoured to shew him every mark of respect and friendship. This confidence assisted his design, and he entertained no doubts of its success.

Among

Among the numerous Chieftains that occasionally frequented the castle, was one named Donald, who, from the length of his visits, appeared particularly intimate with the Baron, and who possessing, in a greater measure than the others, his friendship, made a more frequent return of them. He was handsome in his person, and pleasing in his conversation. While the Baron was occupied in martial employments, he would remain to tend his services to Matilda, and to conduct the affairs of the clan in the room of its Chief. At the time that Macmillan came to the Castle, he was an inmate; and from observation Macmillan collected a knowledge of the preceding circumstances. A thought immediately occurred to him, and an opportunity soon offered itself of carrying it into execution.

Glencairn had been summoned to attend his King in the wars, on the borders; and as his departure drew nigh, he placed his affairs in proper order, and delivered the care of his domains to his brother. A few hours before his departure Macmillan threw himself in his way, and in the course of conversation mentioned Donald. Glencairn took the opportunity of recommending him to his brother, and desired he might be invited to visit the Castle as usual.

“Visit the Castle as usual!” said Macmillan.

“Why not?” returned the Baron.

“And Matilda——” continued his brother.

As

As he said this, he affected to start, and, hurrying away, avoided any further private discourse with Glencairn till the hour of his quitting the Castle. It was then that the Baron drew his brother aside.

“Your words,” said he, “want explanation; they have caused an unknown pang at my breast that I never before experienced. By all our affection, have you aught to say that can hurt me in my tenderest point? Tell me, without concealing any thing that can solve your mysterious conduct, why did you echo back my words, and dart from me as if afraid of what you had uttered? Speak, and ease my pain; but speak so as to clear any foul reflection on Matilda’s conduct.”

“Reflections, my Lord! What reflections! Because I wondered at your

desire that Donald should be an inmate of the Castle in your absence, and should partake of the society of Matilda, are these reasons sufficient to warrant any suspicion of your's concerning the purity of your Matilda?"

"Why say *your* Matilda so strongly?" said Glencairn.

"Is she not your's, my Lord?" replied Macmillan.

At this moment the Baroness, with her infant Edward, approached to take a weeping farewell of her Lord. His tenderness increased more than ever, and, pressing her to his bosom, he mounted his steed, and rode furiously from the Castle, followed by a trusty band of highland warriors.

A short

A short time had elapsed when the Baron received the following letter.

“DEAR BROTHER,

“How shall I inform you of what I would conceal if possible?—but did I not, you would soon hear the cursed tale from others, who would relate it with less tenderness to your feelings. Matilda is lost for ever! Last night she was conveyed away, nobody knows whither; perhaps your thoughts upon the subject may agree with mine. Donald was here; but for a few days past he has been absent, making some preparations at an estate of his in the south. Your presence is now become necessary at Caithness; I can no longer remain here. Different stories are

B 5 circulated,

circulated, and some of them to my prejudice: I shall therefore retire from your domains till the mystery is developed. That this may find you in health is the sincere wish of

“MACMILLAN.”

Imagination only can conceive the distress of Glencairn. One minute he cursed Matilda, and the day that he had wedded her; and the next he would cry out with fury against Donald, as the violator of his peace and honour. When passion had a little subsided, he calmly considered on the affair, and determined to return, that he might investigate the matter himself more closely. For that purpose he dispatched some of his fol-

6 lowers,

lowers, in whom he could confide, to watch in the neighbourhood of Donald's estate; and he himself arrived at the Castle of Caithness shortly after Macmillan had quitted it. Here no one was left to administer consolation to him: Donald had again left it, and his domestics could only mourn with, but could not comfort him. Whole hours would he sit absorbed in melancholy; one moment believing Matilda false, and then remembering all the delights he had experienced with her: her fond endearments recurred often to his memory, and for a moment he acquitted her in his own thoughts from suspicion. As he caressed the little Edward, his soul gave way to pleasure, only to be plunged into deeper misery.

Again he revolved every circumstance. The vassals he had sent to watch near Donald's Castle gave him no satisfactory information. They had heard nothing of Matilda ; they had frequently seen Donald himself, but never with her in his company. When he had retired to his own estate, he had alledged to Glencairn the same excuse for his leaving him as Macmillan had done ; therefore he saw no greater reason to suspect him than he had his brother. But then the words of Macmillan a few days previous to his departure for the wars, again alarmed him, and prevented him from drawing any conclusion on the matter.

It may now be necessary to account for the disappearance of Matilda.

It

It was usual with her to enjoy the cool breezes of the evening in the woods that surrounded the Castle, or to watch the waves as they rippled on the shore of the sea. In one of these walks she was surprised by a party of horsemen, who surrounded her, and conveyed her by force to a ship that was anchored at a place but a few miles distant from where she had been seized. Her entreaties and tears moved not the ruffians; they hoisted their sails, and the wind being fair, bore them far away from the Castle of Caithness. Every moment it became smaller to the eye, till it appeared but as a speck in the clouds. Her lamentations increased as she caught a last glimpse of the shore where all her happiness was centered; she dashed herself upon the deck, and would receive no comfort.

In

In a few days they landed upon a bleak and barren part of the coast, and again took horse. After some hours they reached a Castle that stood awful in its ruins in the midst of a dreary waste. Her heart sunk within her as she saw her conductors moving towards so comfortless a spot, and where her situation was so remote from every habitation, from whence she could expect to receive any assistance. As she stepped beneath the gate, she fancied herself to be descending into her grave. One of her conductors now led her to a part of the pile that appeared to have been lately rendered habitable by several considerable repairs. Refreshments were placed in the apartment, and she was left to silent solitude. Wearied by her past fatigue and distress, she sunk into a harassed slumber.

When

When intelligence of her disappearance was brought to Macmillan at Caithness, he wrote the before-mentioned letter to his brother, in hopes that the greatness of the affliction might hurry him to a premature grave, and thereby at once almost realize his utmost expectations. His hopes, however, were here deceived; Glencairn bore up against the violence of his sorrow, and though melancholy clouded his aspect, yet resignation to the divine will enabled him to appear serene and calm amidst his troubles.

But to return to Matilda.—Her reveries were broke in upon on the tenth day by Macmillan himself. As he approached, she looked up to him in timid expectation, unknowing whether she would receive her deliverance

deliverance or destruction from his hands. At length he thus addressed her.

“Start not, lovely Matilda, at this unexpected intrusion: I come a welcome visitor to free you from your late confinement, to place you again at the head of our ancient house, and to give you to the arms of your expecting Lord!”

“Oh minister of comfort to my troubled soul!” said she, “speak those pleasing words once more! Hasten to deliver me from this abode of misery, and inform my Glencairn of the wretch that has thus treated me, that he may avenge my injuries.”

As she said this, she cast herself at his feet, and bathed them with her tears.— Even the foul fiend that stood before her
started

started at the sight, and shuddered to think on the misery he was preparing for so amiable an object. Recollection of his purpose, however, again roused his powers of action ; he was versed in dissimulation, and endeavoured still to conceal his intent from the beauteous mourner. He therefore raised her from the ground, and began to persuade her to take some refreshment, and to court the charms of sleep, in order to recruit her strength, as the journey they must take would be a long one ; and indeed she needed these restorers of nature, as for the last few days she had eaten merely sufficient to keep the springs of life in action. But this reflection had no weight with her ; she demanded instantly to set out, declaring that the presence of her Lord would

would more effectually restore her exhausted frame.

Macmillan perceived that something must be done to restrain the violence of these emotions; he therefore declared it to be utterly impossible to depart instantly, as he himself was wearied out with the exertions he had made to overtake her.

“And do you not fear,” said Matilda, “to make a moment’s delay in such a place, where villany and violence are marked even upon the walls themselves—where the next minute may bring destruction on us both? We shall, ere long, reach a place of safety, where some hospitable door will be open to receive and to cheer us after the fatigue we have both undergone.”

“Do

“ Do not deceive yourself thus, Matilda. Know then that love has taught me the part I am now acting. I am your Lord, who await your embraces with open arms. This is my Castle; else how could I have gained admission? It was by my orders that you were conveyed away from Caithness; and now I sue thee to return with me: Glencairn shall be no hindrance to our loves, and Caithness shall witness our happy nuptials.”

“ Caithness witness our nuptials !” she cried with amazement and an hysteric laugh, and fell into successive faintings: Macmillan even feared he had said too much for her virtuous and gentle spirits to bear. He then left the room, having sent for some females to recover their mistress. Still he hoped that she might be overcome by persevering in his villanous purpose;

purpose; he had conceived a passion for her, and resolved to satisfy his unlawful appetite in any manner. In the hands of such a ruffian was the innocent Matilda:—alas! had her Lord known her sufferings, she would not long have remained in the power of the monster, his brother.

The next opportunity Macmillan had of seeing the Baroness, he endeavoured to bring her to his purpose by representing her situation, and the impossibility of resistance. Still she persisted in her denial, and told him she felt within that she should not long remain to endure the toils and miseries of life.

Her cool and solemn denial provoked Macmillan in the highest degree.

“Consider,”

“Consider,” said he, “what will be the consequence of rousing my vengeance. Is not your life in my power, and is not your reputation? I can produce witnesses (what will not bribery effect?) to swear they have seen you in the arms of Donald. The Baron, entirely unsuspecting of me, watches and inwardly accuses him; he only waits to have his suspicions strengthened by proof, to sacrifice him to his fury. Once more reflect on the alternative that is offered to you. On the one hand, love, honour, and authority; on the other, death and disgrace!”

The violence of Macmillan again terrified Matilda into more repeated convulsions than before: her constitution was broken, and she was sinking fast into the grave. But the thought of Glencairn would

would again torment her, that he should think her guilty; but a few years at the utmost could pass, and then they would both meet in heaven, and experience the reward of each other's fidelity!—Such were the meditations that supported her in the last hour of her existence; for she fell a victim to the inhuman desires of a barbarous brother.

Soon as information was given to the master of the Castle of the death of the Baroness, his fury rose beyond all bounds. He had supposed the resignation of his captive to be nothing but obstinacy, and her presentiment of death merely as a threat to induce him to liberate her: now he found all his late cunning and anxiety rewarded by nothing but labour and expence. She had been no obstacle
to

to his arriving at the possession of the Barony; he therefore found himself exactly in the same situation he had been before, except that the guilt of thus causing the death of an innocent person, hung upon his conscience. This he soon removed by driving away every thought of the injured Matilda. Instead, therefore, of lurking any longer in that dreary place, since there was now no need for so doing, he resolved to shew himself once more at the Castle of Caithness.

He was received by his brother with open arms. They condoled together on the loss of Matilda, and he renewed the suspicions of the Baron with respect to Donald. So artfully did he conceal his wicked intentions under the mask of affection, that his unsuspecting friend
pressed

pressed his longer continuance at Caithness, which invitation was joyfully accepted, and immediately complied with.

Having thus obtained one point, he revolved over every scheme for effecting his purpose. Little did the crime of fratricide deter him from endeavouring to put his designs into execution; and an opportunity too soon offered itself for the completion of his wishes.

CHAP. II.

“ I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word

“ Would harrow up thy soul !”

SHAKESPEARE.

AN ancient feud had long subsisted between the houses of Duncombe and Malcolm, which had often deluged the clans in blood, but had at length been healed through the mediation of Glencairn. Duncombe, whose proud and restless spirit could not brook the smallest insult,

but who always thought himself injured upon the most trifling occasion, had again involved himself in a war with Malcolm, and meditated an attack upon his Castle. Glencairn, ever ready to assist the cause of the injured, proffered his aid to Malcolm, which was thankfully received.— He therefore equipped a trusty band of followers with the greatest expedition, and putting himself at their head, he hastened to join the forces of his ally.

The battle commenced a few days after; and the haughty Duncombe met with the ill success he merited. His whole band was defeated, and himself compelled to assent to terms of reconciliation. In the ardour of the pursuit Glencairn; being drawn at a distance from his followers, on a sudden found himself surrounded by a
small

small band of men, to whom he became an easy prey, having spent himself in the battle; and after being properly secured by them, he was hurried away far from his late abode of peace and contentment.

Having rode on a few miles, his conductors stopped, and taking him into a retired place, stripped him of his armour, which one of the troop immediately hastened back with the way they came.— They now wrapped him up in a large cloak, and, remounting their horses, rode on that and the following day without intermission, except for refreshment, and to rest their weary animals. On the third morning of his mysterious conveyance from the field of battle, they arrived at a Castle situated in the midst of a dreary waste, whose lofty towers and battlements

c 2

lements seemed to have withstood the violence of many a storm, and whose choked-up moat and once strong ramparts, now crumbled into dust, proclaimed it to have been formerly the seat of war and rapine. One of the party drew out a horn, from which pouring a loud blast that echoed through the courts of the Castle, now become an habitation to the feathered race, the heavy portal was drawn back by a man, on whose countenance villany and murder seemed strongly impressed. The whole party entered the dreary pile. Glencairn, who had hitherto been silent, and meditating on late events, now demanded by whose authority, and for what purpose he had been thus conveyed to the inhospitable mansion.

“The

“The cause will soon be made known to you,” cried the keeper in a harsh tone; and without deigning to converse with his prisoner any longer, he led him into an apartment or rather prison, where he left the unhappy Glencairn to his meditations.

The more he revolved upon the late affair, the more was he perplexed; the desolate situation of the Castle, together with the ferocity of its inhabitants, appeared to indicate the perpetration of some foul deeds. How had he offended, that he should become a victim to such baseness? That Duncombe should thus avenge himself upon him for assisting Malcolm seemed highly improbable; for that Chieftain, among all his foibles, was incapable of such perfidy, and such a secret piece

of villany ill suited the impetuosity of his character. A dark veil of mystery, impossible at that period to be withdrawn, appeared to cover the whole plot ; but he trusted that time and Providence would discover the author of so base a crime.

On examining his prison, he found it strongly secured ; the door was covered with massy locks, and the windows were firmly barricadoed. Day after day passed away without any change ; all of his enquiries were fruitless, and all hopes of escape he perceived were vain. When wandering on the battlements, a permission that was granted him some hours in the day, he would muse upon his fate, and conceive in his imagination the surprise and grief of his brother at his sudden disappearance, and would picture to himself

self the sorrow of his faithful domestics for the loss of their master ; while the thoughts of his boy, whom perhaps he should never more behold, filled his bosom with the deepest concern : but he hoped that his brother would prove a father to his child, nor did he entirely give up the thought that his friends might discover the place of his concealment, and restore him again to his family. Vain delusion ! how soon was to be shewn the fallacy of his expectations ; and the bitter cup of sorrow was to be drained to the very dregs.

One day at an unusual hour, while indulging his hopes in the above-mentioned manner, the bolts of his prison-door were drawn back, and Macmillan stood before him. Glencairn, almost over-

powered with joy at the sight of his supposed deliverer, rushed into his brother's arms, expecting a return of his embrace.

“Glencairn,” said Macmillan, coolly drawing back from his astonished sight, “I come not to ask your thanks as being your deliverer ; you are here in my power, and here shall you remain till you have sworn to observe these conditions.

“Long have I been an eye-witness of the felicity you have experienced in the enjoyment of your honours and possessions. To obtain these I have taken these measures, which if you will peaceably resign, I will restore you to liberty and to your child, upon condition that you instantly depart from Scotland.—Deliverance from my power is vain to expect. The armour you wore was put
upon

upon a dead body of your own size. and the face was so disfigured by wounds, that the deception was unable to be discovered, and already has been buried in the family cemetery with all the pomp and splendour due to the Lairds of Caithness. Your son is in my power ; and unless you assent to the conditions proposed, easily can he be removed, and nothing can prevent my accession to the Barony."

Glencairn had heard the whole of this insulting speech without once changing his posture. Amazement and rage quite absorbed his whole faculties.

"Never, never !" he exclaimed as soon as utterance found its way, "shall Glencairn stoop to such unworthy proposals ! Sooner should your sword drink up every
c 5 drop

drop of my blood, than I would stain the deeds of my ancestors by consenting that an usurper should succeed to the seat of our ancient house. Is this the return you make to the kindness of a brother, who ever loved you with the greatest affection?—My son too!—Distraction is in the thought! You cannot hurt him, barbarian as you are! Must his life be sacrificed to your greedy ambition?”

“You will have nothing but your own obstinacy to blame,” returned Macmillan.

“I shall leave you to think on my proposals.”

Then, commanding the door to be secured, he retired.

Grief, indignation, and anxiety for his
child

childso overpowered the Baron by turns, as to throw him into a deadly fever. Often would he rave upon his boy, and his brother's perfidy, and call upon his far distant vassals to revenge the injustice done to their Lord. At length, however, to the sorrow of the usurping Macmillan, his good constitution overcame the violence of his fever, and kept him alive to all the horrors of his fate.

After the first delirium of the fever, when his senses had returned to him, he observed one of the attendants often to look upon him with an eye of compassion, and who appeared to do for him every kind office in his power. To gain this man to his wishes was the frequent subject of his thoughts; but so narrowly were all his motions watched, that an
c 6 opportunity

opportunity to converse with him had not for a long time presented itself. Macmillan at last returned for a short time to the Castle of Caithness, that his long absence might not create suspicion. When, however, the Baron disclosed his sentiments to the man, he readily came into his views, confessing his abhorrence of Macmillan's villany, and, avowing himself the Baron's friend, resolved to endeavour to effect his escape.

He acquainted Glencairn that the Castle was desolate for many miles round, and supposed by the peasants to be the residence of ghosts, who had thus withdrawn themselves on account of the supposed nocturnal visitors; that the domains of Malcolm being nearer than his own, and besides Malcolm being his friend, they
thought

thought it best to take refuge and seek security there, until he could again shew himself in safety to his faithful clan. Norval (the man's name) having settled the plan together with the Baron, now left him, with a heart much lighter than he had felt for many a dreary day.

The usurper soon returned to the prison of his brother, and finding his terms rejected with so much contempt, he resolved to secure his claim with his blood. On the night previous to that settled by Norval for the Baron's escape, whose turn it was then to guard his prison-door, Macmillan, accompanied by Rufus, a fit instrument for such diabolical deeds, entered the dungeon. The night was tempestuous; the Castle shook to the loud peals of thunder, while the hail

5 poured

poured down in torrents from the clouds. Stretched upon the hard floor, Glencairn slept undisturbed amid the shock of nature. Macmillan paused a moment. A flash of lightning that gleamed in the face of the Baron, awoke him, which at the same moment shewed him the two villains who stood before him with their poniards. Frantic at his danger, he attempted to wrest the dagger from the hand of his brother, but Rufus plunged his in his side. Glencairn fell to the floor.

“Macmillan,” he faintly exclaimed, “spare my child, and may Heaven forgive you as freely as I do! But mark me: if the blood of my boy stains your sword, may its vengeance light upon you! A day of retribution will arrive!”

A second

A second stab from the hand of the fratricide at once dispatched the unfortunate Glencairn.

CHAP. III.

“ For thou wouldst kill the sweetest innocent

“ That e’er didst lift up eye.”

SHAKESPEARE.

REMORSE for a while seized the inhuman fratricide as he looked upon the breathless body of his brother, nor could he immediately banish the unpleasant reflections

reflections that would arise. Roused at length by the voice of the murderous Rufus to the necessity of secreting the dead body of the Baron, they carried it down into a dungeon among the vaults of the Castle, and raising up the boards of the flooring, with the help of their poniards, formed a sufficient cavity to contain the lifeless corpse, and having carefully covered up the spot to secure it from the observation of every human eye, they left the room where their horrible deed had been transacted.

The next day Macmillan returned to Caithness, with all those who had been concerned in the dark scheme, having first bound them over to him with strong bribes and oaths of secrecy. Being the nearest in relationship to the unfortunate
Glencairn,

Glencairn, he became guardian to the infant Edward, now in the fourth year of his age; but the existence of this child still proved an obstacle to his ambitious views, and he feared to remove him also by murder, lest Suspicion should spread abroad her tales to his disquiet, and perhaps to the danger of discovery.

Accidentally one morning, ere the rest of the domestics were up, Norval, who was passing through the passage that led to the apartment of the usurper, in his way to that of the young Edward, hearing some one approaching, who seemed to tread cautiously, with frequent stopping and listening, his curiosity induced him to conceal himself to observe who the person was that, at that unusual hour, thus was stirring in the Castle; but his
mind

mind boded no good when he saw the diabolical Rufus proceed to the door of his master, who at a gentle knock was admitted.

Being led with a zeal for the safety of the infant heir, he himself drew near with the expectation of hearing some words, that might explain the reason of so unusual a conference.

“He must be removed,” he heard Rufus exclaim. Then in a low voice was pronounced—“Edward—to-morrow night——You, Rufus, with a dagger can do it easily.”

Though few the words, Norval was able to collect from them that no good
was

was intended the offspring of the injured Glencairn; and having long determined to watch over the child, in some measure to compensate for the assistance he gave to the murderers of his father, he fixed upon that very day for withdrawing the infant from the power of Macmillan.

At a small distance from the Castle stood the cottage of Norval, where lived his wife and growing progeny. In his daily walks with young Edward he would sometimes visit his little dwelling, taking advantage of the opportunity of so doing, as to him was consigned the care of Edward during these excursions. This day taking his accustomed walk with his charge, in the way to his cot he revolved every circumstance that might assist his intended plan respecting the deliverance

deliverance of his young Iord. At the entrance he was startled at the sight of his wife, who bore in her arms one of his young children.

“What has happened, Gertrude?” cried he with impatience. “Is the dear little fellow hurt?”

Tears gushed from her eyes as she shewed the child to its agonized parent lifeless, and bruised so as scarcely to be recognised by him. A fall from a precipice had occasioned this melancholy circumstance, as the child had been negligently suffered to gambol among the mountains. The afflicted father returned to the Castle; and his melancholy loss banished for the moment every scheme he had formed previous to his visit to the cottage.

cottage. These thoughts, however, again recurred to his memory after the first shock of grief was over; and as he had not mentioned yet the event to any one, he fortunately hit upon a plan that he determined to put into execution the next day.

On the following morning, therefore, he carried the young Edward to his hut, and having informed Gertrude of his design, and enjoined her secrecy, he covered the mangled body of his own child in the mantle of the heir of Caithness, and leaving Edward to the care of his wife, who had received proper instructions for her conduct, he carried away the disfigured infant, and immediately ran onward to the Castle, as he had intended, the better to perform his design.

As

As he drew near to the gates, he quickened his pace, regardless of the numbers that gathered round him at so extraordinary a sight, and rushing up the gallery to the room where he well knew that Macmillan was, he burst in, and with loud cries of seeming sorrow held out the body to the brother of Glencairn, who sat at a banquet surrounded by the neighbouring Chiefs.

Astonished at the appearance of Norval, Macmillan hastily demanded an explanation.

“ ’Tis Edward—’tis the bruised body of Glencairn’s son!” tremblingly exclaimed Norval. “ As I took him with me in a ramble on the mountains, I heedlessly left him by himself to sport
about;

about; but on a sudden seeing him running on at the verge of a frightful precipice, I flew to him to rescue him from the danger he was in;—too late! for on looking round at my approach, he took an unlucky step, and precipitated himself to an early grave!”

The whole assembly mourned as he exposed to their view the breathless infant, lamenting the utter extinction of the house of Glencairn. Macmillan, concealing his pleasure under an affected shew of grief, retired to his chamber, and summoned Norval to his presence, firmly believing it some plan of his to rid him of his troublesome ward. Norval, guessing at his suspicions, confirmed him in the supposition, the better to remove all doubt of the existence of the real heir of

Caithness,

alas! had no joy to shew on the occasion. Glencairn fell beloved by them for his gentleness and humanity. They too well understood the disposition of their new-made Lord. The comparison between him and his predecessor rendered the contrast more striking, and the first acts of his authority confirmed them in their opinion of him. He was rigorously severe in collecting his revenue, he was perpetually engaged in broils with the neighbouring Chieftains, and thereby impoverished and desolated the country, while his vassals groaned beneath the weight of his tyranny.

The murmurs of the people rendered Macmillan fearful of their rebellion. He was afraid to stir out of his Castle, unless accompanied by some of his outlaws,

a number of whom he kept in his pay, to keep him firm in his usurped domains; and besides all these disquietudes, he was visited with all the horrors of a troubled and guilty conscience. The thoughts of Glencairn and Matilda haunted him continually; they terrified him in his day reveries, and in his night visions. Such were the *pleasures* he had heaped upon himself by his own villany.

CHAP. IV.

“ Is not this something more than fantasy ?

“ What think you of it ? ”

SHAKESPEARE.

“ Terrible is the battle of the Chiefs, and horrid the look of their eyes. Their dark brown shields are cleft in twain, and their steel flies broken from their helmets ! ”

OSSIAN.

FIFTEEN years had now elapsed since the supposed death of the infant Edward. The anniversary of Macmillan's succession

to the estate was drawing nigh, which he was resolved to celebrate with a banquet. For that purpose he sent an invitation round to all the neighbouring Chiefs to be of the company. The hall was spread with tables, that groaned beneath the profusion of dainties.

Already had the moon passed its wane, and still loud shouts of merriment, together with the voice of the minstrels, arose from the hall of Caithness.

“Prosperity await the Baron of Caithness!” cried a Chief as he arose. The word was received with joy. Each guest seized his goblet, and the high-vaulted roof re-echoed with the name of their Chief.

Suddenly

Suddenly the clamour ceased. A Knight, clad in complete armour, entered the hall. Regardless of the scene around, he fixed his eyes upon the Baron.

“ The day of retribution will arrive !” he said, and immediately disappeared.

The Baron started in amaze and terror ; a livid paleness spread over his countenance ; and without apologizing to his guests, he abruptly retired to his chamber.

The assembly continued sitting mute with wonder, expecting the return of their Lord ; but finding that he had withdrawn for the night, they broke up from the banquet, and departed from the Castle.

The Baron paced his apartment in visible agitation, revolving upon the circumstances that had happened. Having summoned his servants, he enquired whether the Knight had quitted the Castle; and being informed that he had left it immediately, he dispatched them in different directions to gain intelligence of the stranger. Their search was fruitless; at daybreak they returned fatigued and dispirited, without having obtained the desired information. This added to his perplexity and uneasiness, and dismissing them from his presence, he summoned Rufus to attend him.

Rufus remained closeted with his master some hours; but this conference was concealed from the knowledge of every one. For several days the Baron renewed his enquiries,

enquiries, all of which met with no better success than the former. Every thing appeared to the inhabitants of the Castle to wear an air of mystery. Their Lord still continued gloomy and thoughtful, receiving visits from no one except his confidant who scarcely ever left his presence. At length, to wear away the impression from his mind, he resolved to visit the Court of Edinburgh, leaving Rufus at the Castle, who was to acquaint him with any subsequent event that might lead to the discovery he so much wished for.

The conduct of the Baron was now become the common conversation of the clan. Fame, ever busy, had spread abroad the adventure of the Knight with every possible exaggeration. The most reasonable conjectured that it was connected with some deed either of violence or injustice

long ago transacted. Those who had themselves witnessed his agitation at the banquet, confessed the justice of these sentiments; but the vulgar were more free in expressing their opinions. They persisted that the Castle was haunted, and that the spirit had arisen from his tomb to take vengeance upon the present owner for some foul crime that had since been carefully hushed up from the scrutiny of every one; and they scrupled not to affirm that Rufus was privy to all his transactions. These reports so wrought upon the weak minds of the domestics, that several of them quitted his service; so that the Baron on his return was doubly troubled and confounded, hesitating what methods to pursue to wipe away these reflections so degrading to his honour and dignity.

A long

A long period had elapsed since the event related in the preceding pages had taken place. The Baron, conceiving the re-appearance of the Knight as a thing not at all likely to happen, recovered in some degree his former serenity of mind, such as conscience would permit him to enjoy, which had been rudely disturbed by the unwelcome visitor. Time, to which every thing must submit, had also stopped the mouths of those who had so freely delivered their opinions, which had been a cause of great disquietude to the Baron; and the adventure now was no longer talked of. It was even begun to be whispered to the Chief that the words he had heard uttered were merely the effects of an imagination heated by wine; and, lulled again into security and quiet, little did he expect to be so soon roused from it.

Isabel, the daughter of Malcolm, whose Castle was situated at a small distance from Macmillan's, had now attained her seventeenth year. Lovely of herself without the charms that art could bestow, and with a heart fraught with every virtue, she was the darling of her doting father, and the admiration of every one around her. As Malcolm, though too old to partake of them himself, was passionately fond of deeds of arms, he determined to celebrate his daughter's birthday with a tournament to be held in the court of his Castle, and an invitation was sent to the neighbouring Chiefs to be present at the festival.

Macmillan had in secret long gazed upon Isabel with an eye of love and desire, and he determined to attend at the tournament,

nament, to defeat the rest of her numerous suitors, and to signalize himself in the presence of his mistress. Accordingly on the day appointed, with a train decorated in a most splendid manner, he set forward to the Castle of Malcolm.

The court-yard had been fitted up with the greatest convenience and elegance. A scaffold had been erected round for the accommodation of the spectators, and the middle space was set apart for the feats of the combatants.

Beneath a canopy, in the middle, of crimson satin edged with gold, and worked with the arms of the house of Malcolm, sat the beauteous Isabel. Her auburn locks hung in ringlets on her neck, scarce checked by a chaplet of

lilies, the true emblem of her chastity and virtue. Simply arrayed in a robe of white, that, suspended from her shoulders, fell down in easy folds, she exhibited a scarf beautifully wrought by her fair hands as a reward to the victor. Near her, with eyes swimming with tears of delight, sat her venerable parent. The whole assembly rang with shouts of applause, and the names of Malcolm and Isabel were echoed from every quarter.

Macmillan first entered the lists as her avowed champion, on a milk white steed, and with armour of shining steel studded with gold. On his shield he bore the arms of the house of Caithness. Riding proudly round the circle, he challenged each of the Chiefs to stand forth, who would assert any claim to the lovely arbitress of
the

the contest. Dismayed by his haughty address and martial appearance, and well acquainted with his prowess in the military art, most of them continued silent hearers of his threats, and those who dared his power, were successively defeated by his vigorous arm. Elated with the victory he thought he had gained, and delighted that he had succeeded so much to his wish, he hastened up to that part of the amphitheatre where Isabel was seated, to receive the prize due to the conqueror.

The sudden sound of a trumpet that announced the arrival of another Knight, checked him in his purpose, and caused him to prepare himself for a renewal of the combat. But imagination can alone conceive his astonishment and terror when

when a Knight rode into the area, whom he recognised to be the same that had interrupted the festivity of the night of the anniversary of his succession to the estate.

On a coal black steed he sat clad in armour of the same colour; on his shield appeared the moon rising out of clouds, with the word "*Spero*," for the motto; while the sable plumes upon his helmet nodded to the prancings of his fiery steed.

The Baron, recovering from his terror, and worked up to a pitch of fury at the stranger's unseasonable appearance, while his heart panted with a desire to overcome him, demanded of him in an imperious tone to raise his visor, and declare his name and family.

"I came

“ I came not here to answer questions,” sternly replied he, “ but I came to avenge my injuries, and to punish vice; no more for the present, but let’s to the charge !”

Both, eager for the fight, turned the fronts of their horses towards each other, and at the sound of the trumpet rushed forward with the greatest impetuosity. The first shock was dreadful; their lances were shivered into pieces, and both of them were thrown out of their seats, but which they quickly regained. The heralds offered them fresh spears, which they both rejected as being too tardy to put an end to the fight, and at the same instant each drew out his trusty falchion. Isabel, who disliked the haughtiness of Macmillan, had wished
some

some new opposer to appear to humble his pride; and the comeliness as well as the graceful carriage of the stranger had already interested her in his behalf, and her prayers were put up for his success.

The two Knights rose upon their stirrups, and raised their swords high in the air, with the intent to cleave each other's helmet; but both of them interposed their shields, which well sustained their weight. The next stroke the nervous arm of the Baron beat down the guard of his adversary, but a youth in comparison with himself, and with a rude shock threw him to the ground. A murmur of sorrow ran through the assembly, which was changed again into admiration when they saw him spring upon his feet,

and vault into the saddle, without having received any injury from the fall. Now was the crisis that was to determine the fate of the day; each spectator was held in anxious suspense as they saw him prepare himself for the third rencontre. Isabel could scarcely conceal the agitation that racked her bosom, and her father also wished to see the conclusion of a fight so well begun. At the third charge the steed of Macmillan started at the reflection of the sword of the stranger, who, following up his advantage, quickly unhorsed his antagonist, and pointing his weapon to the bosom of the Baron, compelled him to surrender up his sword, and to acknowledge himself conquered. Macmillan, obliged to accept of these terms, and no longer willing to endure the eyes of the spectators,

summoned

summoned his attendants to accompany him from the ill-fated Castle, and retired cursing the appearance of the unknown Knight, and again tormented with his former fears and disquietudes.

The youthful victor now gracefully approached the balcony, whence he was to receive the reward for his prowess. When arrived within the reach of Isabel, he dropped on one knee, and at the same time lifting up his visor, he disclosed features so animating and yet so tender, as immediately won the affection of the lovely donor, who now presented him with the scarf, which he threw upon his shoulder, declaring that nothing should separate him from so fair a gift but the superior power of Death. Malcolm then
came

came up, and invited him to the banquet that had been prepared within the Castle.

The Knight, having requested the honour of attending as her Squire for the day, led his blooming daughter, amid the acclamations of the spectators, to the great hall, which had been decorated for the occasion. The armour and banners of the ancestors of Malcolm had been fresh scoured and emblazoned. Within the Gothic arches before so dreary, now were fitted up galleries, which were filled with choice musicians, who poured forth strains at once pleasing and mournful to the soul. They sang the ancient deeds of valour performed by former heroes of the clan of Malcolm, and the feats by which the present possessor had obtained such honours and renown. At the head
of

of the table sat Malcolm, at his right hand his Isabel, and at his left sat her youthful Squire.

His conversation had already interested the Baron in his favour, and he was so delighted with his understanding and behaviour, that while at dinner he gave him a general invitation to the Castle, and pressed him to remain there for the present. This was thankfully received, for reasons that will shortly be explained.

Joy sparkled in every eye, and each one sighed within himself as he viewed the beauty of Isabel and her Squire—
“Oh that he were secured to us the heir of our ancient house!”

Soon

Soon as the sun had tinged the western waves with his resplendent beams, and refreshing evening had stolen over the earth, the tables were removed to prepare for the dancers, and the hall was illumined with lamps, that reflected upon the cheerful scene around. The dance was opened by the Knight, accompanied by Isabel, who took the lead. He had disencumbered himself of his armour, and robed himself in the dress of the country—the highland plaid and bonnet, the dark feathers of which waved majestically over his bushy eyebrows. The rest of the Chieftains drew out their fair partners, and gaily tripped along in the reel till a late hour. Nor did they leave the hospitable gates of their Laird till the Castle clock had chimed from a sullen turret the hour of midnight, and warned them of the necessity of their departure.



CHAP. V.

“ So soft, so delicate, so sweet she came,
“ Youth’s damask glow just dawning on her cheek ;
“ I gaz’d, I sigh’d, I caught the tender flame,
“ Felt the fond pang, and droop’d with passion weak.”

MRS. RADCLIFFE.

SEVERAL days had elapsed, and the stranger still continued an inmate of the Castle of Malcolm ; and so greatly had he ingratiated himself in the esteem of its inhabitants, that it was impossible for them

them to think of his absence. He would in the morning attend the lovely heiress in her excursions either over the precipices, from whose lofty summits they looked down upon the vast expanse of ocean that dashed beneath their feet, besprinkled with the numerous Hebrides ; or with her and her delighted father would he explore the cool recesses of the wood, that sheltered the east side of the Castle from the attacks of the bleak east wind. He would with her visit the cottages of the grateful peasants, rendered comfortable and happy by her bounty, and with her deal around their kindness to the fatherless and distressed. In the evenings would he sit in the company of Malcolm, and listen to his tales that he recounted of former battles and past difficulties. He would accompany the
soft

soft voice of Isabel with the sweetly sounding harp, while her raptured parent hung over them with every mark of fondness and admiration. This familiar intercourse between the several parties gradually infused different passions into the minds of each. Malcolm was highly pleased with the attention and deportment of the Knight, whose soul had long been confined within the silken bands of Love with that of his beauteous mistress, who on her part shewed equal signs of affection.

It is not to be supposed that our hero spent so much time at the Castle, without its inmates feeling a desire to be acquainted with the name and family of their guest, together with the reason of his mysterious appearance to the Baron of Caithness,

Caithness. Malcolm therefore had determined to snatch the first opportunity of hinting his wishes; but he was anticipated in his intention by the Knight himself, who one evening addressed the Baron in the following manner:—

“Doubtless, my Lord, you have been surprised at my mysterious conduct, and at the terror that manifested itself in the countenance of Macmillan, both at my entrance at the banquet and the tournament. The words I there uttered may have excited surprise. Willingly then would I endeavour, by relating my birth and misfortunes, to gain a friend to my cause; and if the recital would not prove unwelcome or tedious to your ears, I will now satisfy your curiosity in these respective points.”

Malcolm having informed him of his great desire to be made acquainted with these things, and as Isabel was far from dissenting to his proposal, he proceeded—

“Perhaps you still recollect the time when the infant heir of Caithness was buried in the vault of his ancestors, having sunk an early victim to the grave by fall from a tremendous precipice?”

Malcolm bowed assent.

“You may also remember an old servant of the former Baron of Caithness, called Norval.”

Malcolm again bowed.

“Shortly after the death of the young
6 heir

heir he suddenly disappeared from the Castle."

"I remember it well," replied his venerable hearer, "and many conjectures arose upon the occasion, and reports were spread abroad prejudicial to the honour of Macmillan."

The Knight resumed his narrative.

"The reports were unfounded. Norval had previously requested of his master a dismissal from the Castle. For what reason this was kept a secret to me is unknown, though I now can partly guess the cause.

"Norval in his retreat was accompanied by his wife and children and myself. By every one was I thought the child of Norval; but start not when I

tell you I am that Edward, the real heir of Caithness, and son of the unfortunate Glencairn."

These words produced such an effect upon his auditors, as was visible in their countenances; wonder was impressed upon them, and they almost appeared to doubt the truth of his assertion, but this was quickly removed by the rest of his relation.

"I was in my fifth year when, one morning being taken out by Norval for an excursion upon the mountains, he led me to his cottage, and there left me with his wife. He then returned to the Castle with the dead body of one of his own children, who had been killed by a fall from the summit of a rock, and produced
it

it to his master as the body of his nephew, for reasons I shall proceed to relate.

“ Though I was surprised at these proceedings, yet I consented to continue with Norval, being informed they were for my benefit, and won over to him by his caresses and kindness. We soon after retired to a town near the metropolis of Scotland. Here was I educated by my foster parent, who was well qualified for so doing in some respects. Under him I acquired the art of curbing the fiery steed, and of wielding the javelin; he inured me to bear the extremes both of heat and cold, to dare the current of the most rapid streams, and to climb to the brow of the highest precipice; from his example I learned also the principles of virtue. Near Edinburgh I was taught the more polite accomplishments of dancing and

music. But from the ardour of these pursuits was I roused by the illness of Norval. Perceiving he was fast approaching 'to that bourn from whence no traveller returns,' he one day summoned me to his presence, and imparted to me in privacy the long-expected secret.

'Edward,' said he, as I approached his sick bed, 'now is the time that I am called to fulfil my promise—to unravel that mystery, which doubtless you have thought I have hitherto observed with respect to yourself.'

He then recapitulated to Malcolm what has already been related concerning the death of Glencairn, and the words Norval had heard respecting the murder of the infant heir. The Knight then continued.

“ Norval

“ Norval concluded his account of the murder of my parent, with delivering to me a ring that he had carefully preserved. It had been given him by Glencairn, and he now presented it to me, that by that token I might prove myself the real heir of Caithness. He also repeated to me the dying words of my injured parent, which he had overheard; and it was by pronouncing these to Macmillan that I terrified him to that degree, as he thought nobody was privy to that horrid transaction except his confidential servant.

“ Upon the death of my benefactor, hearing that an army, headed by the King himself in person, was marching into England to resent some injuries that had been offered to him by the borderers, I proffered my services without disclosing my title; as I did not think myself yet sufficiently

ficiently qualified to assert my claim, being only seventeen years of age. They were accepted, and in the eye of my Monarch I had such opportunities of distinguishing myself, that I became a great favourite with him; he would have bestowed on me the honour of Knighthood, but he was unacquainted with my birth.

“ At the conclusion of the war, which lasted but a few months, I set out for the seat of my ancestors, now the residence of the villanous usurper. So great, indeed, was my haste to visit this scene of my former happiness, and to avenge myself of my injuries, that I neglected first to visit the wife of Norval—a neglect the most unpardonable, as she would have been of the greatest assistance for the asserting my claim to the estate. I have since enquired for her; but she had withdrawn

drawn from her former residence, and no one could inform me whither.

“ I first arrived in these parts when I appeared at the banquet of Macmillan. Recollecting the widow, I returned to seek for her, but in vain. Two weeks before the tournament I came here a second time ; and hearing of the intended festival, and of the justice of the owner of these domains, I wished, by engaging personally with my antagonist, by his death at once to avenge my father, and to retrieve my rights. In the interim my impatience would not suffer me to remain quiet in my concealment, which was a cottage on the borders of the forest. Frequently did I ride out to endeavour to meet Macmillan before the approaching tournament ; but it seems that he shuts himself up in the Castle with Rufus,

as if to hide his villany from the observation of mankind. Once more has he escaped; for never could I raise my hand against a man defenceless in my power; but the vengeance of Heaven cannot be far distant from the wretch who deprives the fatherless of his right, and puts to death his benefactor, his brother."

Here Edward finished his narrative. The recollection of the miseries his father had undergone overpowered his faculties, and he could not refrain from giving vent to his emotions. But the villany of his uncle quickly recurred to his memory, and expelled all other ideas except those of revenge.

"Never," cried he, as fire flashed from his eyes, "shall the son of Glencairn
stoop

stoop beneath his misfortunes, or tamely put up with such complicated injuries."

Malcolm heard in silent sorrow, nor was Isabel less concerned, though joy filled her bosom when she reflected that her beloved was heir of an ancient house, a friend to their family, and something whispered her, that now there was less hindrance to the completion of her fond hopes; they therefore endeavoured, and not without effect, to sooth his rising passion..

To change the current of his thoughts, Malcolm proposed to him to take up his harp, and to entertain him with the sounds drawn from its delightful strings—an occupation he was particularly pleased with. Isabel united her powers, and the

remainder of the evening was spent cheerfully and with pleasure.

Next morning, when Edward was preparing to take his usual ride, a servant entering, informed him that Malcolm awaited his coming into the library.

“Tell your Lord I attend.”

He immediately descended, and found the Baron sitting there, as if in thought. At his entrance he arose.

“I have been revolving,” said he, “the circumstances you related to me last night, and believe me when I assure you that I doubly esteem you as being the son of my unhappy friend Glencairn, who, as I had supposed, died in battle, in
assisting

assisting me against another Baron, my enemy. I have now sent for you, that, in conjunction with you, we may take measures for compelling the usurper to restore you to your rights."

"Many indeed are my obligations to your Lordship," returned Edward, "and so many that I never can repay them, but which it shall be my study to deserve."

"Stop," replied Malcolm, "nor say too much. I offer my assistance as a debt that I have long owed to your house for the services I have received from the hands of your parent; and happy shall I be if I make myself at all instrumental in restoring you to your possessions and to happiness."

Edward

Edward was astonished at the Baron's extreme kindness and civility, but feared to say more in expressing the sense of his obligations, lest he might affront the warm feelings of his benevolent friend. He therefore acquiesced in the words of Malcolm, and with him consulted on the most speedy manner for obtaining justice on his side. At last it was determined that Malcolm on the following day should send an invitation to Macmillan to meet him, that he might discourse with him on a subject of the highest importance. This point being settled, the Baron proposed that, with his daughter, they should pay a visit to the cottage that had afforded him a retreat before his appearance at the tournament.

Their

Their way wound round the side of the mountain, on the half way of which the Castle reared its towering battlements, amid trees that rose in majestic grandeur. This forest spread around its shades to a vast extent, and, descending into a dell, through which our party was now journeying on in cheerful conversation, continued its gloom to a great distance. In about an hour they emerged from the wood, and on a gentle declivity stood the cottage they were in search of. Over its thatched sides the woodbine spread its pleasant verdure, and peeped in at a window. Within a wooden paling that was fastened up round the front of the hut, was a small piece of ground enclosed, from whence the family procured their vegetables and fruits.

Soon

Soon as the horses had stopped at the gate, an elderly man, apparently about sixty, accompanied by his daughter-in-law, and a child of twelve years old, ran out to meet them.

“God bless your Honour,” cried old Richard, as he held the stirrup of Malcolm to assist him to alight from his horse, “it is a long time since you have seen our little dwelling, or tasted our homely loaf.—And you too, my Lady,” as he ran to assist Isabel, his usual occupation, but in this he had been anticipated by Edward; “I had been saying that I feared I should not see your fair face again; but I suppose you were all taken up with young Squire, who lodged here with us before the feast at the Castle.”

By

By this time they had seated themselves in a neat little room, and a flowing jug sparkled on the table.

“Where’s John?” enquired Isabel.

“Oh, he’s with his father, in yonder wood; I warrant they will be here soon, my dear Lady.”

As he was speaking, his son and grandson entered with a bundle of wood, which having laid down, they bowed respectfully to the company, and advanced to salute their former guest.

After having remained here a short time to refresh themselves from their fatigue, they again returned to the Castle, not without leaving with its tenants fresh proofs of their bounty. On the way
back

back Isabel told Edward that the cottage they had just seen was her favourite ride on a fine day, and that its inhabitants had long been accustomed to receive its landlord with familiar gratitude.

“ But I had not the least thought,” she continued, “ that it was the same you mentioned, nor have I once thought of it for a long time, so much have we been taken up with the society of each other.”

“ I hit upon it by chance myself,” replied our hero. “ As I was bewildered in the mazes of the forest, I met the wife of young Alleyn, who conducted me to his humble dwelling; and as you are pleased with the honest simplicity of its owners, it will be my highest pleasure to repeat our visit.”

Isabel

Isabel was pleased with his answer, and gladly complied with his wish in promising to promote the felicity of those good peasants.

CHAP. VI.

“Thou who such weary lengths hast past,
 “Where wilt thou rest, mad nymph, at last?
 “Say wilt thou shroud in haunted cell,
 “Where gloomy rape and *murder* dwell?”

COLLINS.

WE left Macmillan, after his defeat by Edward, returning to the towers of Caithness.

When

When arrived there, he retired to his apartment, and gave vent to the various passions that agitated his breast. Contempt for the youth of his victor, shame at his defeat, terror at the ominous appearance of the Knight in black armour, but, above all, anger presided, at having the laurel of victory thus rudely snatched from his grasp.

“Are all my expectations thus blasted?” he cried, as he paced the room backwards and forwards; “are my fond wishes to be frustrated by the good fortune of that audacious stripling? Shall he sink me into nothing, and in the eye of my neighbouring Chiefs? Shall he thus shew his hateful visage to terrify me—to haunt my steps wherever I go? Sooner will I give myself up a victim to the grave, than.

than put up tamely with these provocations! Either he shall perish, or I must cease to exist!"

Thus he continued to rave, and to utter imprecations on the head of our Knight, till the first gust of his anger had blown over. Then he began to relapse into his former dismay, when cool reason gave him time to reflect upon past circumstances; for, in the words of Shakespeare,

"Conscience makes cowards of us all."

He remembered that the stranger's words at the banquet must have had some meaning in them; but how could he have known the dying words of his brother? Rufus was the only mortal present at the transaction.

"He

“He could not have told him!” he exclaimed; but he almost feared to make enquiry concerning it. At length he ordered a servant to call Rufus to him.

“Rufus,” said he to him in a voice of kind condescension, that he always made use of in his conversation with his servant, fearing that he might provoke him to reveal secrets that must bring destruction on his head, “Rufus, you probably have heard of my disappointment at the tournament to-day.”

Rufus, who never accompanied his master in public, because his sight was so disgusting to every one, answered in the affirmative.

“Perhaps

“Perhaps you know who it was that caused my cursed failure.”

“Some Knight,” replied he, “that nobody knows any thing about.”

“That’s the serious mischief!” returned the Baron. “You recollect the night when the anniversary of my succession to this estate was celebrated, that a stranger stalked up to me in so mysterious a guise, and openly pronounced words, mind me——”

“I do.”

“Words that were pronounced by Glencairn in the agony of death!”

“Aye!”

“Yes, indeed. Now as we were alone when we perpetrated the——”

“Deed,” said Rufus, as villany sat imprinted on his brow.

“By

“By what means then could those words have reached his ears?”

As Macmillan pronounced these words, he narrowly watched the countenance of his hearer, to see if it should betray any symptoms of having broken the trust confided in him; but his face was still contracted into a frown, nor exhibited any marks to justify his suspicions.

“The winds must have borne it to him,” said Rufus with a laugh, that at the same time discovered his apprehensions.

Macmillan was more perplexed than ever, as he was convinced of his associate's fidelity. However he continued.

“It

“It was the same that overcame me in the contest to-day. He certainly must have reason for his actions and his words: for as he prepared for the combat, he exclaimed to my interrogatories concerning his name and family—‘I came not here to answer questions, but to revenge my injuries!’ And he fought as if resolved to conquer or perish.”

“These reasons,” replied Rufus, “must be discovered before we proceed in any other matter. Let us await the disclosure of them with patience. Malcolm will certainly invite him to the Castle, and some one may be found who would not resist the charms of gold, but acquaint us with any thing that passes which may throw light on the affair.”

Macmillan acquiesced. The event shewed the justice of Rufus's remark, as the stranger continued at the Castle of Malcolm. Rufus engaged to procure a servant who should relate what passed within his walls, and Godfrey undertook the villanous office. He was the most proper person that could be procured, as he was a principal attendant on his master; but his soul hankered after something more noble in his opinion than to view innocence and goodness in perfection, therefore he readily came into the wishes of Macmillan.

CHAP. VII.

“ When Murder bar’d his arm, and rampant War
“ Yok’d the red dragons of his iron car,—
“ When Peace and Mercy, banish’d from the plain,
“ Sprung on the viewless winds to heaven again ;
“ All, all forsook the friendless guilty mind,
“ But Hope, the charmer, linger’d still behind.”

PLEASURES OF HOPE.

SHORTLY after his commission, Godfrey came to the Castle of Caithness, and informed its master that he had heard the

young Knight addressed by the name of Edward; that he had become a great favourite with his master, and that it was not likely he would soon quit the walls of Malcolm. Being rewarded for his diligence, he returned to collect fresh matter for intelligence.

Rufus was again summoned, and Macmillan began :—

“ I have heard from Godfrey that our unknown enemy is called Edward. It is the name of the child that Norval killed by throwing from a precipice, who otherwise would have inherited this estate. Now it is probable that some of the villains who were assistants at the decayed Castle, may accidentally have overheard the dying words of Glencairn, and have
made

made use of them in tutoring another to terrify me into a second present for securing his fidelity."

"A good thought!" replied his colleague in iniquity; "we must examine our accomplices respecting this;—luckily they are all still retained upon your domains except Donald, who died soon after the transaction, and Norval who retired to the south."

"We will do so, good Rufus," returned his master, "and I think we shall succeed. I will meet them to-morrow in the cavern by the sea-side, beneath yonder cliff, and be it your part to collect them there."

Rufus did so, and Macmillan appeared before his former associates.

“Tell me,” he cried, “if aught has ever transpired from the mouth of any of you, concerning what passed at the ruined Castle, where once I needed your assistance?”

All unanimously denied having done such a base action. One stepped forth.

“If any of us can have thus broken his engagement,” said he, “after having sworn to the contrary, and been so handsomely rewarded, he is worthy of the bitterest punishment. Death would not be too much for such perfidy!”

“I thank you for your zeal,” answered Macmillan, “nor would I have asked such a question, which seems to accuse some one of dishonesty among you, had not this stripling, who is now with Malcolm, pronounced

pronounced to me the very words uttered by Glencairn in the agonies of death. Therefore you will allow I have cause for asking such a question."

All of them swore that they wished they might perish if they had not kept it secret.

Macmillan drew his sword.

"Swear upon my sword!" said he.

They drew their own, and clashing them upon his, cried—

"We do swear!"

"I am satisfied of your fidelity," returned their Lord, "and now ask of you from whom such words could have

been procured. Donald is dead, and Norval alone remains; but I know not where."

"Perhaps," said Rufus, "Norval may be now dead, and in his last moments may have revealed the secret. He always was a chicken-hearted fellow, and not worthy of joining in the company of such brave men."

"Hell!" replied Macmillan. "I will no more heed his words!"

So saying, he departed from this *honourable* assembly, after having secured their secrecy with fresh rewards. As he returned home, these reflections occurred to him for the first time, and which greatly inspired him with confidence.

"Norval

“ Norval certainly must have died; else he would, ere this, have appeared himself, had he meant to turn his knowledge to his interest. Glencairn is no more; no one will there be to witness against his dying in the field of battle, and the infant heir has long ago been consigned to the vault where his ancestors lie interred.”

He was in this temper of mind, fluctuating between doubts, hopes, and fears, when he received Malcolm's invitation to a conference, which he accepted. Godfrey was immediately sent for to explain in some manner the meaning and subject of their intended meeting, as he had not visited his master since the stranger had been there, and he well knew he had not yet departed. But Godfrey was as igno-

rant as himself; for says he—"Every thing wears such an air of mystery, that there is no divining the proceedings at our Castle. But this I know, that our visitor has already infused a passion into the breast of Isabel, while he himself acknowledges the power of her charms."

This intelligence only served to increase Macmillan's hatred against Edward; and at the appointed time he went to the towers of Malcolm, swelled with pride, envy, and resentment. He was met at the gateway by its owner, unaccompanied by him whom he yet dreaded to behold. Having refused refreshments that were offered him, Malcolm conducted him into an inner apartment.

Here

Here he proceeded to inform him of the reasons for the deceit practised upon him with respect to Norval's child—that Edward himself was alive, the very same that repeated the words which Norval had overheard—and that in his name he demanded a restitution of the estate, otherwise the lawful heir would cite him publicly as the murderer of his father.

While he was relating this, the countenance of his hearer at first exhibited surprise, which afterwards changed into terror, and again expressed a contemptuous indifference; and rising up, boiling with fury, he exclaimed—

“Think you that Macmillan would be terrified into submission by such a forged tale? Were not you yourself present at

the funeral of my brother, whose bloody corpse had been exposed to view, that all dishonest suspicions might vanish?"

Here he was interrupted by Malcolm.

"A body was produced, I acknowledge, which it was impossible for any one to recognise, or to disbelieve it to be the body of Glencairn, so covered and mangled was it by wounds."

To this the usurper made no direct reply, but continued to vent his fury.

"And is not the infant heir also buried by the side of his father? Who can deny such incontestable proofs?"

Malcolm

Malcolm replied that he had already explained to him these matters; but says he—"I will call for Edward, and he will produce a witness that you cannot deny being a true one."

A servant introduced Edward. He had again put on his sable armour, and now advanced to his uncle; at the same time he raised his visor. Macmillan started at the resemblance; his features recalled to him the memory of Glencairn, and conscious guilt for a moment overspread his countenance; but he sufficiently recovered himself to attend to the words of the youth who stood before him.

"I chose this method of recovering my estate, and of calling you to a sense of
of

of your guilt, that you may have it in your power to avoid public disgrace. Malcolm, as you must have perceived, is my friend, and an assistant to my cause. If his words have persuaded you of my being in reality the true heir of the house of Caithness, it is well; but if not, recognise this ring, and remember who it was that bestowed it on me."

Macmillan took the ring, examined it, and returned it.

"It is some forgery, I suppose. But imagine not that I will resign the hundredth part of what I justly possess; but will maintain my right either in the Court of Judicature, or in the combat."

Having

Having said this, he burst from the apartment, and abruptly quitted the Castle, denouncing vengeance against Malcolm for his cursed interference in his concerns, and against Edward, as he termed it, for his infamous imposture. But in his heart he could not help acknowledging Edward to be his nephew, and as such the true heir to the Barony of Caithness. He confessed within himself that the tale which had been related to him was plausible, and worthy of credit; but he determined not to give up the estate. Norval, he knew, could not rise from the dead to bear witness against him; and the rest of his accomplices he trusted he had doubly bound over to his interests. However, Rufus was summoned to assist him in his deliberations. Between them it was resolved to remove Edward as soon

as possible, that he might no more trouble them by laying claim to the estate, and that he might not revive in the minds of the clan the memory of Glencairn, who had been greatly loved and revered by them; and they justly feared that, were Edward to infuse among them suspicions of the illegality of Macmillan's title, who was universally detested, and declare himself the offspring of their favourite Lord, they might rise up to drive him from his usurped seat, and to restore the true heir to his rights.

Malcolm and his young friend were astonished at the behaviour of Macmillan. The former had read in the countenance of the usurper that he inwardly acknowledged the legality of Edward's claim, but

but had determined to withhold the estate from its true owner, thinking himself secure, from a want of sufficient evidence to bring his villanies to light. It was a delicate point, and required much consideration. He knew not in what manner to advise Edward to act. The disappearance of Gertrude (Norval's wife) at the departure of Edward for the wars, appeared mysterious, and to have some connection with Macmillan, who could not have persisted in his refusal to comply with the terms proposed to him, were he not certain that no witness could appear to confound his schemes of villany.

The meditations of Edward were similar to these. They however determined to renew a more strict enquiry after Gertrude

trude than the former; and that if this should prove unsuccessful, Edward resolved to summon Macmillan before the King of Scotland, to declare his villanies, and support his own pretensions in single combat.

Servants of Malcolm were therefore dispatched to different parts of the kingdom, to endeavour to gain intelligence of his foster parent.

CHAP. VIII.

“And Hope enchanted, smil’d, and wav’d her golden
hair,

“And longer had she sung—but, with a frown,

“Revenge impatient rose !”

COLLINS.

TOWARDS the dusk of the third evening after the visit of Macmillan, as Malcolm with his daughter and Edward, were sitting in social conversation over a cheerful fire, which
the

the frosts of February rendered necessary, Godfrey burst abruptly into the room with the intelligence that a Knight had just been attacked at a short distance from the Castle, by a band vastly superior in number to his own, which consisted of only two attendants, and that after a short conflict they had left him for dead in the vale below.

“ It was at this juncture I happened to pass by, but staid not a minute by the stranger, as he faintly desired me to fly for immediate assistance. One of the servants was killed on the spot, and the other sought safety in flight.”

Edward waited not a moment, but hastened as fast as possible into the forest, preceded by Godfrey, and followed by
another

another servant, who carried with him a few cordials to be administered to the stranger, to recover him sufficiently to bear a removal to the Castle.

An hour had elapsed, and still Isabel and her parent sat waiting the return of Edward with the wounded Knight, as he had not been obliged, according to Godfrey's account, to go far into the wood. A drift of snow now began to fall, and the wind to sigh along the battlements, and anxiety now gave way to fear. Malcolm rang for a servant, whom he ordered to go in search of Edward, and to enquire the reason of his delay.

He had not left the room for this purpose, when the Baron heard a great tumult below in the hall, mingled with loud cries
of

of grief, in which Barnard's voice (the man that had accompanied Edward with the cordials) was not the least audible. Before reflection had time to arise in his mind upon so strange a circumstance, Barnard entered the room with every token of despair, exclaiming wildly—

“He's lost! he's lost!”

“Who, Edward?” shrieked Isabel, who could scarce support herself from falling to the floor, while the Baron enquired who it was he thus bewailed as lost, though his mind foreboded it was his young friend, his now darling child.

“It is he! it is he indeed!” Barnard uttered with a groan. He said no more. Isabel had fallen into a strong convulsion fit.

Malcolm

Malcolm violently rang the bell. The room was soon filled with domestics, some of whom he directed to attend Isabel to her apartment, while he enquired among the men-servants where Godfrey was.

“He,” exclaimed Barnard, “it was he that betrayed my young master into the hands of the villains, and then escaped with them himself!”

“What villains?”

“I know not to whom they belonged, or who was their Chief,” returned Barnard, “but——”

“Proceed in a distinct detail of circumstances,” interrupted the impatient Baron, “that I may find some clue to guide me to the knowledge of the instigators of this act.”

“We

“ We hastened into the woods below the Castle, where Godfrey had mentioned the Knight had been attacked. Edward, who was a small distance before me, was again listening to that rascal’s feigned tale, when suddenly a band of men rushed out from an adjoining thicket, and began to hurry him away. It seems that, from their eagerness to secure him, I had passed unnoticed by them, which therefore gave me an opportunity of bringing the intelligence.”

“ Fetch me instantly my sword and helmet!” cried Malcolm. “ Once more will I wear them to punish the perpetrators of so vile a deed !”

“ Stop !” cried the frantic Isabel, who, having recovered from her first shock, had again entered the room at the time her father had called for his armour.

“ Expose

“Expose not yourself, my dearest parent, to the merciless elements, or again enter into a contest at so advanced a period of life. Should I be deprived of you, my only protector, who would there be to comfort and support me?”

Malcolm, won over by her supplications, and convinced of the inutility of his intention, dropped it entirely; but dispatched ten trusty men, with Barnard at their head, to bring back Edward, or discover where he had been concealed.

They quickly equipped themselves, and taking the fleetest horses from the stable, hurried along in the track pointed out to them by their leader.

Malcolm now turned his attention towards his lovely daughter, who sat overwhelmed with terror and despair. He consoled her with the thoughts of his speedy return, that his emissaries must overtake and liberate him, and that if they failed in their commission, he would compel Macmillan, whose threats now first recurred to his memory, and whom he scarce doubted to be the author of the deed, to give an account of his proceedings with respect to Edward.

Having succeeded in calming her grief by these ideas, he conducted her to her chamber, and retired to his own for the remainder of the night.

“ Poor Edward ! ” she exclaimed, as she
heard

heard the wind roaring over the turrets of the Castle, “perhaps now you are openly exposed to its keenest blasts—perhaps you are sinking beneath the stroke of a murderous assassin! Oh, horror is in the thought! My poor brain cannot bear it longer!”

She again relapsed into convulsions. A physician from the nearest town was sent for, who arrived early the next morning. Her fits had been succeeded by a delirium, and she now groaned beneath the pains of a parching fever. Scarce could Malcolm be persuaded to leave her bed, although necessary for his own repose. Every hour he made enquiries of the physician relative to her disorder. The third day the crisis approached that

was to restore a daughter to her doting parent and to the world, or plunge her into an untimely grave. But the goodness of her constitution and her youth prevailed; from that time her disorder rapidly decreased, but left her a prey to tormenting fears: and a settled melancholy, which Malcolm in vain endeavoured to remove, spread itself over her pallid countenance.

Malcolm, in order to ascertain whether the carrying off of Edward had been executed by the order and partisans of Macmillan, had kept a strict eye upon the affairs of his Castle. He employed a servant to watch his daily walks, but they led to no suspicion of his having secreted the young heir; he had not been absent before nor
after

after the deed, from the Castle of Caithness a single day together; and Malcolm began to imagine he had been mistaken in supposing him the oppressor of his nephew in this instance.—But man must not entirely rely upon his own observation; human insight into things is but weak, and easily deceived

CHAP. IX.

“ Full many a melancholy night
“ He watch’d the slow return of light,
“ And sought the pow’rs of sleep,
“ To spread a momentary calm
“ O’er his sad couch, and in the balm
“ Of bland oblivion’s dews his burning eyes to steep.”

WARTON.

THE darkness of the night and the
beavers of the ruffians being down, pre-
vented Edward from obtaining any know-
ledge of his conductors.

“ If

“ If they were common robbers or assassins,” he thought within himself, “ I should, ere this, have been rifled or dispatched.”

He now for the first time remembered the words of the usurper ; but he hesitated to think him guilty of such atrociousness and perfidy.

“ When he might honourably have rid himself of me either by giving up the Barony, or trying his success in the combat, he would hardly make use of this impious as well as troublesome and hazardous method of removing me from disturbing him with future unseasonable visits.”

He could make no enquiries from his
G 4 conductors.

conductors. His mouth had been gagged previous to their leaving the forest. He again wondered within himself how Barnard and Godfrey had escaped; for he knew not that Godfrey was among the troop, so completely had he disguised himself from being recognised by him.

After riding about an hour, the pain arising from the position in which he was fastened to the horse became so great, that one of his guides perceiving it by his emotion, had the compassion to relieve him. His legs had been fastened round the horse's body, and his hands tied to the pommel of the saddle. Two men, one on each side of him, held the reins in their hands, while another followed with a sword drawn, ready to plunge
in

in his body the moment he made the least attempt to escape. These were preceded by three more, who completed this infernal band.

In five hours the snow laid so deep upon the ground, and the wind roared so loudly over the barren mountains, that the party were compelled to alight, and kindle a fire beneath a fragment of an impending rock. They then supported their wretched victim from his horse, who was benumbed in every joint, and almost senseless from the intenseness of the cold. Seated round the crackling blaze of the fire, they quickly emptied the contents of a wallet that contained bread and cheese, and a good flagon of brandy, a little of which liquor they poured down Edward's

G 5

throat,

threat, and chafing him with their hands, they again recovered him to painful recollection.

As soon as Morning had spread her tints over the face of Nature, they again set forward. On the third day about noon they entered upon a dreary waste, in the middle of which stood a pile of ruins, which Edward, from the description given him by Norval, immediately perceived to be the same to which his unfortunate parent had been conducted eighteen years before.

Imagination can scarce picture to itself the various sensations of rage, anguish, and despair that now burst upon his mind, and altogether overwhelmed him.

That

That same portal was now to close upon him, that had formerly excluded the author of his existence from any further connection with the world. He now found that his uncle, not content with murdering his father, would also put an end to his own life, and blast the happy expectations he had once formed to himself.

As the gate turned on its rusty hinges, and the sound grated on his ears, reflection forsook him, and he was borne senseless to the apartment prepared for him.

The first thing he perceived after the return of his faculties was, that two persons were supporting, and endeavouring to

recover him. As soon as they saw that their exertions had proved effectual, they prepared to leave him to himself.

“Stay one moment,” cried Edward, who was now freed from the gag, “and explain by whose order, and for what purpose I have been thus decoyed, and brought hither.”

“That you will soon know,” said one of them in a surly tone, “sooner perhaps than you will like.”

Both then left him to his reflections.

Anxiety and fatigue soon overspread him, and sleep insensibly stole upon his eyelids. As soon as he awoke, he began to examine the place where he was confined. It appeared to be in one of the

turrets of the Castle, from its great height from the ground. A loophole, high above his reach, and strongly barricadoed, was the only opening to admit the light of day; and when the sun failed to display its rays, the room was left in almost total darkness. In one corner was the mattress on which he had been reposing; near that was a chair and a table. Such was the furniture that composed his miserable apartment.

Towards noon, as he could judge, a man, with whose features he was totally unacquainted, entered with a loaf of bread, a pitcher of water, and a bottle of wine, which he placed upon the table. He again endeavoured to learn by whose order he was confined, for as yet he doubted

doubted it to be his uncle's ; but he could obtain no information of any kind.

Six weeks passed without any alteration having taken place in his situation. The same person had every day brought him his allowance, and replenished his fire with fuel, which was an indulgence he himself had requested.

One night, as a high wind was roaring over the ruins, Edward, who had not yet retired to rest, by the glare of his fire saw a small part of the wall opposite him near the door, agitated by the passing gusts. Curious to search into the cause of this, he marked the spot with his eye ; for the fire was too dim for him to examine it that night.

After

After the visit of his keeper next day, he began his search. Upon applying his hand to the place, it appeared to him to give way to the touch. With a knife he endeavoured to make an opening, for he was convinced it was not a part of the wall that he was trying to remove. At length he succeeded, and to his surprise found that it was a small piece of canvas made to resemble the wall itself, and which had been put there doubtless to conceal something, for it was too small to admit his body. Having entirely displaced it, a roll of paper fell from the cavity to the ground, which he immediately conveyed into his bosom. Upon further search he found that this cavity was made by a stone having been removed; and, to screen it from observation, it had been closed up in
the

the manner described. Eager to read the manuscript he had discovered, which he thought some unhappy prisoner like himself had concealed there, he replaced the canvas, and having replenished his fire, proceeded to examine the contents of the roll. Having unfolded it, several small scraps of paper were enclosed in the middle, containing various wild pieces of poetry, no doubt the effusions of a troubled mind; but what principally attracted his attention was the roll, which he perceived to contain a manuscript of some unfortunate prisoner like himself. With eager curiosity he explored the narrative.

THE MANUSCRIPT.

“ All you who delight in the miseries of your fellow-creatures—in whom the pangs of an agonized person produce sensations of pleasure, how would your hearts rejoice to hear the groans I utter, to see me writhing in the pains both of body and mind ! But should one, in whose breast glow true pity and sensibility, light upon this narrative, let him as he peruses it drop a tear to the memory of Donalbain. Yet, alas ! it would grieve me to think that any innocent person should suffer like myself, or once be confined within these horrid walls, for then were his case as hopeless ; he could not
escape

escape from the snares of the murderous Macmillan !”——

Edward shuddered as he thought on his own situation, and proceeded. ———

“ Oh vain and short-sighted mortals ! learn from my misfortunes how unstable are all human affairs ! I once was blessed indeed ! I was at the height of human felicity, and thought no one could interrupt, much more could totally destroy it ; but I am punished for my presumption in indulging such expectations.

“ My narration may prove tedious ; but I wish to relate concisely every circumstance that has led to this fatal catastrophe ; that, should this ever be discovered, posterity may acquit my memory of any
infamy

infamy that may now be attached to it, and may at the same time know to what lengths ambitious avarice has impelled a Macmillan.

“ When I think of thee, fair daughter of Corral, my heart sinks within me; I fancy thee in the hands of the inhuman ravisher—I hear thee, in imagination, crying upon my name to free thee from his grasp, and in vain stretching out thy hands to implore compassion from our flint hearted persecutor.

“ Oh! why did Fortune place me between a brother and his impious projects? Had I been the younger, Macmillan would have had no motive for thus heaping misery on my head; his conscience
would

would never have been burdened with the guilt of fratricide.”——

Edward now recollected a conversation he had once had with Malcolm, in which the latter had mentioned a brother of Glencairn that had suddenly disappeared, and had since never been heard of. It was now evident in what manner he had been concealed, and by whose direction. He began to be doubly interested in the narrative, as he was perusing the misfortunes of an uncle.——

“The domains of Caithness, upon the demise of our parent, devolved on Glencairn, the eldest son. I had at that time just reached manhood; and as a patrimony, amply sufficient to support the younger branches of our ancient family, had been
allotted

allotted to me and my younger brother, we determined jointly to make our entrance into the world, and for that purpose we repaired to the capital.

“ Our family procured us admission into every circle ; upon our introduction at Court, the Sovereign was pleased to signify his approbation of us, and placed us about his person.

“ At this time the wars on the borders requiring the King’s immediate presence, we accompanied him to the scene of action. Here it was that my brother’s disposition manifested itself. It happened in the very first action that we had with the borderers, the horse of the King fell under him, and its rider was at the same moment wounded with a javelin.

“ The

“The English, seeing our leader fall, pressed forward on all sides with shouts of victory; the Scottish army was routed, and had not I perceived the danger of my Prince, he had certainly fallen into the hands of the insulting foe. But being assisted with my little troop, I bore him in safety to his tent, and then retired to refresh myself after my late fatigue. Macmillan had envied my exploit, which was soon made public, and I was loaded with every mark of honour.

“Before we again took the field, I was made a Knight, and was preferred to be one of the table companions of the Sovereign. But little did I suppose what injury my brother was plotting against me, or in what manner he was supplanting me in the favour of the King. He
had,

had, immediately I had quitted the royal tent, after having laid my Prince in safety, entered it himself, and took care to be the first to wish him joy of his escape.

‘But,’ continued he, ‘I could wish that any other had preserved the life of your Majesty than my brother, prompted as he is by such unworthy motives.’

‘What unworthy motives?’ said the King.

‘Sorry am I to relate aught that can reflect dishonour on Donalbain,’ returned Macmillan; ‘but did I not, I must see my King basely betrayed by a coward subject. Does he not wish to signalize himself, that he may be entrusted with
some

some post of greater consequence, and watching his opportunity, go over to the enemy at a time when his loss cannot be remedied?’

‘What reason have you for such suspicions?’ said his Sovereign.

‘I do not say absolutely,’ replied the dissembler, ‘that such are his intentions; these ideas started into my brain upon a discourse I lately had with him. But I thought it my duty to acquaint my Liege with these circumstances, that he may be cautious to guard against any treacherous designs.’

“The King thanked him for his good intentions, but said nothing farther on the subject. He also thought it his duty
to

to reward his preserver in the manner I have related ; but, as I afterwards discovered, he kept a strict watch upon my conduct.

“ Our army was besieging a place of great importance, and the King had made a determination not to depart from before it on any account till it had surrendered. We had gained intelligence from our scouts that succours were hastening to the place, among which was an abundance of all kinds of stores, the taking of which would be of the utmost loss to the enemy, as the town could not hold out without them. A chosen body was therefore dispatched to intercept these, among which my corps formed a part, as the King now thought it a fit time to try my allegiance to his cause.

“At no great distance was an immense heath, over which it was necessary for the escort to pass. As this was bounded by a forest, our commander thought that a convenient spot for secreting his men against the attack; and mine, as a corps of reserve, were posted behind a small eminence that commanded the road completely. About midnight the van of the enemy approached, and passed on without taking any notice of our men, though they were but ill concealed. In the centre came the stores and provisions covered by an immense body of men, behind whom another troop of cavalry brought up the rear.

“Our signal was sounded. We rushed out impetuously, and made a vigorous attack upon their rear. Other troops
poured

poured out from all parts of the wood, and provoked a terrible conflict. I with my servant had pursued to a little distance from the rest, when four men made up to us, armed with enormous battle-axes. They flew on us like furies. The first blow of one of them laid my horse in the dust, and the second would have dispatched me, had not my faithful Swerin, at the moment he had lifted it to strike, laid him by the side of the expiring animal. Again we returned to the charge.

‘Come on, Rufus!’ cried one.

“They did come on, nor did they retire till another of their companions had bit the dust with his fellow. We then examined ourselves. I had received a

cut across the shoulder, but that was nothing in comparison with my servant, who was quite exhausted with loss of blood, that poured from a wound on his thigh. Luckily some of my men came up; they put Swerin on a horse, and we returned to the field of action.

“The battle was still fierce, but we were evidently getting the better of the enemy:—at my approach I flew with my squadron to the waggons; we had already dispersed the rear-guard. Once more we hewed down the foe, and succeeded in drawing off nine of the waggons; the rest were mostly secured by the remainder of our forces. With these we returned in triumph to our camp.

“The

“ The King himself received us at the entrenchments, and thanked us for our noble conduct. I rode at the head of my company ; and the King stopped to ask me some questions concerning the battle.

“ While he was conversing with me, Macmillan came out to meet us ; at sight of me he started back, and, terror-stricken, slunk into his tent. At that time I could not conceive his reason for such a conduct, which now is, alas ! too well accounted for. However he presently returned, and wished me joy on having finished the expedition so successfully.

“ The King took this opportunity of once more blaming the suspicions of my brother. He enlarged upon my conduct, and testified his admiration of it.

“ Macmillan could not conceal his chagrin; he again cast out hints of my infidelity, which made no impression on the mind of the Sovereign at that instant, but which afterwards recurred to him with double force:—so violently did the wretch seek my ruin, at a time too when he outwardly professed for me the sincerest regard. I was again advanced in dignity, while my brother evidently sunk in the estimation of his Prince; this though he perceived, yet he was not discouraged, and a better opportunity soon occurred of effecting at once his diabolical purpose.

“ The surrender of the town, which followed of necessity, brought about a truce, which was agreed to on both sides, and we returned to spend the winter in
the

the capital. Here a succession of banquets and hunting parties took place, in which I always bore a distinguished part.

“Upon the birth-day of the King a general tournament was appointed, which was to be succeeded by a banquet and dancing. The beauties of the Court were all assembled, who witnessed the feats of the heroes from elegant balconies. King David himself partook not in the combat, but he was arbiter of the contest. At length I was victorious, and approached to receive the prize from the beauteous Queen. Scarce had I received it from her hands, than I cast my eyes on the lovely Mary, who sat in the train of her mistress. I stood before her, confused and irresolute; the whole place swam before my sight. When I had sufficiently

recovered myself, I presented her with the scarf I had won, and asked her permission to be her Knight for that day.

“ She gracefully accepted my proposal. At the banquet she sat by my side, and I alone led her down the dance. That night, the happiest I had ever spent, flew by as a vision. The assembly broke up before I thought it had begun. I thought on nothing but the daughter of Corral, the lovely partner of my joys !”——

The fire now shed its last blaze as Edward finished the paragraph. He perceived it to be past midnight, and therefore judged it to be time to lay by the manuscript, and to continue the perusal of it the following evening.

When

When that arrived, he drew the writings from their recess, and proceeded. ———

“ I soon after met the lovely maid in a grove near the Palace; there we interchanged vows of mutual constancy and attachment. She sunk upon my breast while she declared her love. Oh, moments of bliss never to return! That flower, beauteous as the evening sky, and tender as the breeze of morn, is blighted, and doomed to endless misery!

“ Oh Mary! thy form was refreshing to my sight, as the stream is to the thirsty traveller! Pleasant was it to see thee sport upon the mountains—to see the zephyrs play upon thy snow-white bosom! Lovely, with her dark brown ringlets, was the fair daughter of Corral!

“ Again the trumpet called us to war. The farewell I took of my love was tender and affecting. I tore myself from her embrace, and drowned my reflections in the din of arms. Now let me hasten to relate that fatal day which proved so destructive to many Scottish warriors.

“ The army of David lay encamped near Durham, opposite that of Philippa, Edward’s Queen. We were divided only by a river. Both sides remained inactive for several days, as if fearful to be the first to begin the contest. At length David’s impetuous temper surmounted his prudence, and he resolved to give battle to the enemy; but first he wished to reconnoitre the position and strength of the hostile camp, and upon that difficult service he appointed me.

“ In

“ In the dusk of evening, therefore, I crossed the river a few miles up the country, habited in the dress of an English soldier. In this disguise I hoped to be able to approach near enough to effect my mission. Fortune seemed to favour my design; near one of the outposts I met with a soldier alone—most likely he had been sent out on the same errand with myself; he fell an easy prey to my sword, but not before I had extorted from him the watch-word.

“ Having acquired some information relating to the camp, &c. I determined to alter my plan, and to venture into the midst of it, so far did zeal for my Sovereign lead me, which was afterwards to be interpreted into treachery against my country.

“ As soon as I was within call, I was challenged. I repeated the watch-word, and pronounced the name of Bertrand.

‘ What, returned so soon ?’ replied the watch.

‘ Aye, I have had luck,’ said I, in a feigned voice.

‘ Conduct him to the General’s tent,’ said the Commandant.

“ As I was led through the midst of the tents, I made what observations I was able. When in the presence of the General, he enquired into the success of my examination. I immediately perceived the man I had killed had been sent out for a spy ; I therefore made a good account of
affairs,

affairs, telling him I had met a Scotchman, who had also been sent out as a scout, who had told me the strength and disposition of their forces. At the same time I made up a feigned relation of these several points, which appeared to satisfy him.

“ I now only watched an opportunity to make good my retreat. For that purpose, an hour after my admission, I repaired to another egress from the camp, and having mentioned the word, hastened out, under pretence of being entrusted with dispatches for the city of Durham. But this discovered the whole deceit. Intelligence was taken every half hour to the Commander in Chief of every person that entered or left the camp. I was therefore detected for a cheat almost immediately; and although I reached the Scotch
camp

camp in safety, yet the English General had entirely altered the formation of his forts, and the disposition of his troops. He expected an attack, and was prepared to receive it.

“ According to my intelligence, David gave orders for the attempt against the following night.

“ The night was dark, attended with a drizzling cheerless rain. No moon shewed her friendly light, but all was dark and drear. Our army was divided into three bodies; two of these were to attack one side of the camp that was flanked by the river. This part I had observed to be more weakly defended than the rest, and on that account the grand attack was to be directed that way, headed by David in person. The two columns forded the
river

river in silence, and mounted the walls. The third, in which I had been stationed, was ordered to attempt the gateway, that the troops within might be deceived, and by applying their chief efforts in our quarter, the rest of our forces might the more easily succeed in surrounding them. It is certain that, by some means, the English had gained intelligence of our plan, so completely was it defeated. The Scottish King was suffered to enter with most of his followers: on a sudden the signal rang out; troops hemmed him in on every side, and made a horrible carnage of our men—

“ Full many a gallant Knight

“ Lay gasping on the ground.”

“ It was in vain for him to resist longer. He was compelled to surrender

himself a prisoner of war, with the rest of his men who survived, among whom was Macmillan. The leader of our column, seeing the fate of the others, thought it prudent to retire. Harassed by the enemy, we made a hasty retreat. We recrossed the river, left our camp and baggage to be plundered, and with the greatest difficulty made our way back into our native land, not without the loss of the greatest part of our men. The news of our defeat had already reached the capital. All was confusion and terror; the Queen of David had no resource but in a truce, which was accordingly concluded.

“ In the meantime our Sovereign was taken to the metropolis of England, to deck the triumph of the conquering
Edward

Edward and his Amazonic Queen. Here while in durance, Macmillan had a better opportunity of ingratiating himself with the King, and of making another attempt to injure me in his esteem.

“Immediately after the triumph David returned to the apartment allotted to him, filled with fury at his disgraceful exposure.

‘Cursed fortune that could act so maliciously towards me!’ cried he, as he walked frantically up and down the room.

‘Cursed fortune indeed!’ said Macmillan. ‘But then, when we know ourselves to have fallen victims to treachery, there is a little palliation of our dishonour.’

‘What

‘What leads you to suppose such a thing, good Macmillan?’ said the King.

‘Ah, my Liege,’ he returned, ‘nothing but your grief could have concealed it from your eyes. It was apparent to every man in the army. Did not Donalbain, my unworthy brother, tell us of the weakness of the camp on the side which we attacked? Did we not fall an easy prey into the hands of men, who had evidently been placed there in expectation of what followed? And has not the villain ingloriously fled, nor sought to deliver his Sovereign, or to share with him the sorrows of captivity?’

“The King at the time made no remarks on the discourse of the serpent that thus stung me in the dark; but it
sunk

sunk deeply into his mind, and took exactly the effect Macmillan had wished.

“ At the beginning of the truce I had flown upon the wings of love to press my Mary to my fond expecting heart. I found her beautiful as ever at a Castle of Corral's, far distant in the north. Her parent welcomed me to it with joy, and received me as his son. Now had I my heart's content; I enjoyed the delicious company of my love without interruption. Oh days of happiness! too blissful were they indeed for any mortal to enjoy without some alloy of bitterness! I then enjoyed a paradise, too soon to be exchanged for the dark abyss of misery.

“ Thus flew on the hours of joy till the return of our Sovereign. Corral had
smiled

smiled upon our increasing love. My family was every way noble, and my character till then was unquestioned. Our union had not yet taken place, but we waited for the sanction of our royal patrons. Accordingly we once more hastened to the capital, to congratulate David on his return.

“ I was astonished at the cool reception I met from the King. He frowned as I approached him, and bowed only to my address. I could form no idea as to the meaning of this conduct. I retired, vexed at my reception, as it afforded so much satisfaction to those who had once envied me every smile I received. At my return home Mary perceived my disorder, and enquired the reason of it. I answered peevishly I know not what, so
agitated

agitated was my mind. She clasped me in her arms, and tenderly sought to calm the passion within me. I heeded her not; I broke from her embrace, and retired to my chamber, to enquire into my own thoughts what misdemeanour I could have been guilty of. I could think of none.

“ By this time Reason again resumed her seat. I recollected how I had returned the caresses of my angel; I therefore flew to her, begged her forgiveness, and acted as extravagantly fond as before I had been morose. Joy sparkled in her eyes, which were filled with tears at my late sadness. She perceived it to have been no small circumstance that could have thus moved me, and again she
asked

asked the reason of it. How could I refrain from satisfying her natural request?

‘Is that all, my Donalbain?’ said the soul-subduing maid. ‘Let them frown; they dare not hurt the innocent, much more my beloved. Who would seek for pleasure in a Court? We will remove far away from its troubles and intrigues. True happiness dwells in the union of virtuous hearts as well in a cottage as in a Palace; therefore, my dearest, smooth your ruffled brow, and let serenity take place of sorrow.’

“So spoke the excellent maid; I clasped her passionately in my arms, and assented to her reasoning.

“It

“It was soon whispered about that Donalbain was disgraced. I took no pains to counteract the remarks of the envious; I courted not for fresh favours. It was sufficient to have been once rejected. As soon as it was known that Corral intended his daughter for my arms, he also shared in my disgrace, and we therefore returned to his estate to avoid their malicious taunts. But first I paid a visit to my elder brother at the seat of our ancestors. I found him also happy, and beloved by a beauteous wife. We exchanged tokens of our friendship, and I again bade adieu to him, never more to return to him in peace, alike doomed to misery and destruction.

“All the little preparations for our union were now ready. The day appointed

pointed was but at a short distance, and nothing appeared possible to overturn our happy prospects. But a cloud, charged with fate, was ready to break upon our heads.

“ I had written to my brother Macmillan to acquaint him of my approaching felicity, and to entreat his presence at our nuptials. Two days before they were to be celebrated, he rode into the court-yard. I flew out to meet him; I thanked him for his kindness in thus visiting me when all others shunned my company. The viper, as he pressed me to his bosom, was meditating a sting upon me, that he knew would be incurable.

“ As Carrol and his daughter were out on a little excursion, I had an opportunity

nity of talking over my affairs with him in private. He told me the King was still more angry at my late conduct. He blamed me for having given way to my vexation, without any attempt to re-establish myself in his favour. It was most likely he said a little scheme of his Majesty to try my affection towards him ; but turning away in discontent, and retiring immediately from his Court had appeared to him an affront, and he almost feared he would resent it.

“ Thus spoke the artful dissembler, nor told me the true purport of his visit.— We were now joined by the Lord of the Castle and my intended bride. I observed Macmillan’s eyes sparkle with delight at her entrance, and fondly supposed he participated in my happiness, in being

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likely to possess so amiable an object—
alas ! so cruelly to be torn from me !

“ He staid but a few hours, and excused himself to me, alledging he was on business for the King. I bade him an affectionate farewell, and hastened to Corral, to tell him of our discourse immediately on the arrival of my brother. I found him musing attentively over a packet that lay before him. Upon seeing it was I that interrupted him, he arose, and turning towards me, with tears in his eyes, he delivered to me the papers. I feared to look on them, and seemed to ask an explanation before I looked into them.

‘ It is a mandate from the King, my dear Donalbain,’ said he ; ‘ some enemies
have

have conspired against our peace, and have succeeded.'

“ I opened the fatal paper and read: —

TO THE WORTHY BARON CORRAL,
OF INVERNESS.

‘ Your services have always proved faithful and successful to our throne. It is time, therefore, to think of making a suitable return; and as I know your daughter is dearer to you than any sordid gain, I have determined on bestowing her on a man every way deserving an heiress of your ancient house. I intend giving away your lovely child, and therefore expect you in the capital, that the nuptials may be solem-

nized without delay. Macmillan, of Caithness, is the man alone worthy of so great a treasure.

‘DAVID.’

“While I read this, my body shook with fear, but anger flushed my countenance. I then saw through the whole artifice of my brother. I had already received hints from some to beware of so dangerous a kinsman. I then treated such advice with contempt; but now it appeared too prudent. My soul sickened as I again looked on the terrible mandate; and he who had faced thousands of foes, fainted at the sight of that tremendous word—‘*David*.’

“While

“ While in this condition, Mary entered the room. As soon as I had recovered, her eyes caught the fatal paper that lay open on the table. She hastily read the contents, but was not agitated so much as I had expected. Her looks cheered me into life.

‘ The King has it not in his power,’ said she, ‘ to force me into the arms of another.’

‘ Ah, Mary !’ said Corral, and he heaved a sigh as he spoke, ‘ you know not the power or disposition of David. What he wills, that he will execute ; and who dares oppose him ?’

“ These words again filled me with anguish. Corral perceived it, and added—

‘ However we will not despair ; I will repair to Edinburgh, and represent our case to our Sovereign. He may listen to us, and relieve us from our misery.’

“ On the following morning he set out, accompanied by Mary. I had, the night before, again received her vows never to be joined to another.

‘ If all intercession is vain,’ said she, with tears in her eyes, ‘ we will e’en fly from the tyrant’s power, and give ourselves to solitude and love!’

“ Dreadful necessity, I thought ; but there was no remedy. A pang struck upon my heart as they crossed the bridge, and cast their eyes back upon the tower for the last time.”——

Edward

Edward regretted that he was compelled to close the manuscript for that night. On the following evening he again resumed it.——

“ It may be necessary to mention what had passed at Court since the return of the King to his own dominions. At that period Macmillan had collected all the information he was able concerning my behaviour during his imprisonment. He there found I had never joined in any attempt to effect his deliverance, but had passed my time in the sweets of love. He envied my happiness, and denounced vengeance on me. Glencairn had as yet no heir ; he therefore conceived it possible that, were I removed out of the way, he might have some chance of succeeding to the family estate. He therefore sought

his opportunity to incense David still further against me, that he might go to extremes, and shelter himself under the protection of his King. Once more then he began by observing how faithful most of his Nobles had been in persevering to effect the freedom of their Sovereign.

“ David assented to this remark.

‘ But one unworthy Knight,’ continued he, ‘ instead of employing himself so honourably, must needs give up all consideration of the affairs of his country, and bury all cares in the arms of love. Donalbain is that unworthy man!’

‘ Are you certain of your information?’ said the King.

‘ Alas,

‘Alas, too sure!’ replied Macmillan.

‘Then I give him up!’ said David with a frown.

“Macmillan had gained enough for that time to satisfy his hopes. This passed before I had presented myself to his Majesty, and was the cause of my frigid reception.

“Macmillan was the first to tell the news of my intended union with the daughter of Corral.

‘So worthy and beautiful an object ought never to be sacrificed to such a traitor!’ said he.

‘Right!’ said the King; ‘that we must prevent.’

‘He ought not to live!’ said Macmillan, sounding the opinion of the King.

‘Not so,’ replied he. ‘Let him live to witness his disgrace.’

“At a future opportunity Macmillan, who was high in the King’s esteem, represented to him his love for Mary, and persuaded David to let him be the bearer of his letter to the Baron of Inverness. But he could not have received the letter I had previously sent him to invite him to our nuptials, else he would not have had the audacity to have shewn himself to me, his injured brother.

“Corral

“ Corral hastened to the capital, and laid his troubles before the King. David said, peremptorily, he had considered the matter, and was determined the marriage should take place.

“ The Baron perceived that further complaining was useless; he therefore secretly dispatched a messenger to call me to the city. My heart ached as I received the summons; too well I guessed the reason.

“ The Baron, on my arrival, acquainted me of his severe denial. I was fearful and irresolute. It was too plain that my misery was determined on. The more I reflected on that, the more my resolution was fixed; I resolved to brave the fury of the storm, and to defy the malice of

my enemies: but this my parent (so I may call him) prevented. He represented that to be certain destruction. He advised that we should retire to some humble spot, in a part less liable to suspicion, and there to await with patience any further event that might transpire. I asked my love her opinion of our plan; she readily agreed to it, and we began to put it into execution.

“ Our first concern was a place of proper concealment. Fortunately I recollected that the steward of my father had quitted the family but lately, and had gone to reside with his aged mother in a cot among the Grampian Hills. That I thought the place most suited to our purpose; I therefore set out to prepare it for the reception of my love.

“ Old

“ Old Hubert rejoiced to see me. I trusted him with my story, and he readily agreed to secrete us in his dwelling. To avoid suspicion, I sent Swerin to tell Corral, and to conduct him to our cottage. Daily did I wait in expectation of my messenger. The fifth day passed, on which I had reckoned he would return; and the three following elapsed without any intelligence.

“ On the ninth night, when we had just composed ourselves to sleep, we were roused with a violent knocking on our threshold. I hastened down to receive the party; but on opening the door, saw no one but Swerin. My heart failed me.

‘ Mount

‘Mount this horse immediately,’ said he, ‘else you will lose Mary !’

“ I needed not twice telling ; I instantly complied, and we rode on at a furious rate. I had no time to ask for an explanation. A few hours’ riding brought us within sight of the Castle of Caithness. Upon the skirts of the forest stood the cottage of Swerin’s parents. To this he conducted me. After having taken some refreshment, I required an explanation.

‘ I hastened according to your instructions,’ said Swerin, ‘ and delivered your letter to Corral. It was then on the second day, and I was ordered to prepare for returning on the third. That same evening a note was brought me by
a servant,

a servant, who waited not for an answer. I opened it, and read ;—I have it now.’

“ He then gave me the note.

‘ I fear all is over. Macmillan has this moment come from the King to take us down to Caithness. We shall set off in a few days. I fear he has suspicions, so closely are we watched. Wait till we depart—perhaps we may find means to escape ; if not, hasten and bring Donalbain to Caithness, and there secrete him till he can find an opportunity to rescue us.’

‘ They

‘They departed yesterday,’ continued Swerin, ‘and I have brought you here according to the orders in that letter.’

“I embraced my faithful confidant, and told him to endeavour to obtain acquaintance among the servants of the Castle, that he might get an opportunity of seeing Corral himself, and of asking his advice for our proceeding. It was necessary we should use dispatch, as the nuptials were deferred only till the coming of the King, who was expected in a fortnight at farthest. When this was settled, I retired to an apartment to sleep.

“On awaking, I found Swerin standing beside my bed.

‘What success?’ said I.

‘Tolerable,’

‘Tolerable,’ replied he ; ‘ I met Martha, Mary’s maid, hard-by, taking a ramble in the wood.—‘ So ho, Martha,’ said I, ‘ don’t you recollect your old friend, Swerin?’—‘ Sure as faith ! ’tis he,’ said she, with the prettiest smile that could be.—So says I, ‘ How does your mistress do, Martha?’—‘ I shan’t answer that question,’ says she, ‘ till you tell me your business here.’—‘ Oh, as for that,’ says I, ‘ I have come upon a visit to my poor father and mother, and God knows that they need my assistance.’—‘ Is not your master here too?’ says she.—‘ I won’t answer that question,’ says I, ‘ till I have had an answer to my first one ; so how does your poor mistress do?’—‘ Oh, poorly enow indeed,’ said she ; ‘ here have been fine doings. There’s she weeping and praying ; there’s Macmillan beseeching and rejoicing.’—‘ And what says Corral?’

says

says I.—‘Oh, he walks about like a shadow,’ says she, ‘and says nothing; but he’s making some scheme, I warrant.’—I now thought I might trust her with telling her where you were; so, says I—‘You may tell your mistress in secret, that my master is at my father’s house, doing every thing he can for her.’—‘Very well,’ says she, ‘and so good-by.’—‘Good-by,’ said I; and so here I am.’

“So the poor fellow ran on, and I knew his way too well to think of interrupting him. At the conclusion I felt something like hope dawning on my mind. Towards evening I walked near the Castle in hopes I might see Mary appear at some of the windows; but that happened not. I heard the shouts of revelry within; but they produced no consolation to me.

Despondingly

Despondingly I returned to my cot. The next day I ordered Swerin to go to the same place as he met Martha at the day before, in hopes that she might bring some intelligence that might keep my hopes alive; but he met her not.—The third day proved more fortunate: she brought him a note for me. He staid but to tell her to be at the same place the next morning, and hastened to me with his prize. I broke it open eagerly, and read the contents.

‘ DEAREST DONALBAIN,

‘ What miseries have befallen us since our last interview in the capital! I then thought myself wretched, but that was paradise to what I now endure. The
taunts

taunts and love of Macmillan are intolerable, and to think to what a wretch they would unite me would drive me to madness; but I reflect that nothing shall extort the words—"I marry him freely," from me. My only hope is in escaping their hands who now confine me. Matilda seems to compassionate my distress; my only hope of escape is in her! Should so fortunate an event take place, I shall find you at Swerin's cottage. My father, under the guidance of your servant, will be able easily to overtake us. Think me not worse, because I thus throw myself into your arms; but I am driven to the hard necessity of being your companion in so cheerless a journey, or to become the wife of the loathed Macmillan. But a cheerless journey did I say?—No, I meant

meant it not; in your company I could journey in peace through the vale of death. The consideration that you are near, and perhaps thinking of me, enlivens the heart of your

‘ MARY.’

“ Oh, with what joy I received this letter ! Swerin shared in all my transports, and applauded his own good management in effecting so great a service for me. The next morning my servant gave an answer to Martha, to convey to her Lady. In this I repeated that my life depended wholly upon her escape to me, and that I would omit no opportunity to render that practicable; but that I trusted
mostly

mostly upon the hope she herself had expressed in her enlivening note.

“ But these expectations were again damped. Martha appeared no more. It seems that her regular walks to the wood had been observed. Macmillan having received intimation of this, watched her himself the following morning, and took from her the letter she had just received from Swerin. He guessed immediately it was mine, from the writing. Rejoicing in the discovery, he hastened to the apartment of Mary, and throwing it upon the table with a sneer, asked her if she recognised the writing.

‘ Ah ! yes I do, barbarian ! ’ said she.

“ He

“ He said nothing, but quitted the room, and gave strict orders that Martha should always be watched whenever she left the Castle. But that never happened. Her mistress told her of what had passed, and bade her think no more of hope ; for she had given herself up to despair. As she finished this, a gentle knock at the door was heard, and Matilda entered the room. Martha left them to themselves.

‘ And are you so kind,’ said the lovely weeping maid, ‘ as to visit me in my distress ?’

‘ Alas !’ replied Matilda, ‘ could I in any manner ease your sufferings, how fortunate should I think myself ! Glen-cairn thinks the same. It is by his desire I pay you this visit, to tempt you
to

to confide your troubles to my faithful ears.'

" Mary was overcome by her affection, but answered only with her tears. Matilda redoubled her kindness, and at length obtained from her the whole secret of our love. She sympathized in her afflictions, and promised to lend her assistance in forwarding her escape."

* * * * *

" Ah !" exclaimed Edward, " my unhappy uncle has fallen a victim to the cruelty of his brother sooner than he expected. Your time in compiling this part of your manuscript has, however, not been lost. It has gained you one who can pity such severe misfortunes."

As he said this, he perceived a sort of postscript written to the bottom of the paper in a different hand; but conceive his horror when he read the following.

“I too have fallen a victim to the villany of Macmillan. Oh inhuman brother! to sacrifice two who bore towards thee so friendly and affectionate a disposition! But let me not name the monster of iniquity. Was it not enough that I nourished thee in my bosom, and treated thee better than thou hadst a right to expect?—And perhaps my dear Matilda may have fallen a victim to thy delusive and murderous arts. But such deeds cannot go unrewarded. A day will come when an *all-righteous Judge*

shall search into the hearts of men, and expose either their vices or their virtues; and who shall also deal to each their due rewards or punishments.

“Macmillan, I adjure thee, spare my child, my infant Edward. Should ever a compassionate soul read this address, let him remember he pities the fate of Glencairn, of Caithness!”

“This unhappy office,” said Edward, “has been reserved for thy still more unhappy son. Yes, dearest author of my being, not only will I drop a tear to thy remembrance, but will also revenge thy own and thy offspring’s injuries. But I had forgotten the restraint that is now put upon me, and which will prevent my
vengeance

vengeance from falling on thy oppressor.
Unfortunate Edward !”

Having uttered these words, he dashed himself on the ground in an agony of grief and despair.

“ It is then too plain. I no longer hesitate to conclude my oppressor to be that inhuman uncle—that unnatural brother. Farewell the towers of Malcolm, and its inmates !—But can I quit Isabel for ever, and make no endeavour to release myself, to avenge my injuries, and to obtain what I hold dearer to me than existence ?—No more shall I behold her sparkling eyes, her lips smiling on me with delight ; but the villany of this man will precipitate me into an early grave,

thus to put an end to all my flattering expectations."

These were his reflections till he sunk into an agitated slumber. In his dreams his father appeared to him, exhibiting his wounds bleeding afresh, and calling on him for revenge. At another time he fancied the sorrow of Isabel at their separation, and again Macmillan approaching to deprive him of life.

The following morning found him in a high fever, that gained ground rapidly. He incessantly raved on the names of Glencairn, Isabel, and Macmillan. At one time he would vent threats of vengeance against his oppressors, and at another supplicate their pity. Every possible

possible assistance was given him, but his malady baffled every exertion for eleven days, when a favourable change being observed, they succeeded in restoring him to life; yet in so feeble a condition, that he could scarce be recognised for the same person he had been a few weeks before; but proper nourishments in a short time brought him to his former state. He was also allowed, at stated hours of the day, to walk upon the ramparts, which added much to the recovery of his constitution.

It was now the middle of May; his confinement had been nearly three months, and yet no change had been made in his situation, and he began to fear that it was intended he should finish his days in

this miserable abode. But then he thought they would have suffered him to perish when oppressed with the violence of his fever. This consideration made his case still more inexplicable to him.

One evening the door of his prison opened as he was again reading over his manuscript papers to lull away his weary hours, and he perceived not the interruption till he heard his name pronounced by his usual visitor. Upon turning round, he was surprised at seeing another person in the room, who immediately from description he supposed was Rufus, and he was soon confirmed in his supposition. Sickening at the sight of an assistant in all his master's diabolical practices, he turned from him in disgust. Rufus perceiving

ceiving this, begged him to be composed, to attend to some proposals which he was to make him from his master.

Edward, with a nod, implied that he would attend.

“Macmillan,” Rufus began, “is at present at Caithness, and will remain there or come here according to circumstances. I have come to make a proposition, which if you comply with, liberty awaits you; but if it be rejected, fatal will be the consequence.”

Edward shuddered as he heard the words of this villain; he well knew he was fully in his power.

“Mention it,” he answered.

“To sign this paper.”

At the same time he held to him a deed, already drawn up, which required him to declare himself an impostor, and to depart from Scotland within a certain period. As his eye glanced over it, his fury arose still higher at every sentence, and he threw it from him with contempt.

“Sooner shall your murderous dagger drink every drop of my blood, than I will thus disgrace my own family, and cause Malcolm to detest me ! You shall find the dignity of our house shall not suffer from the cowardice of a son, who will prove himself by his actions the offspring of Glencairn !”

Rufus,

Rufus, finding it vain to attempt any thing further while he was in this temper of mind, sent word of his ill success to Macmillan, as he had been ordered.

When this message arrived, Macmillan determined instantly to go himself to the Castle, as he thought his presence might have a better effect than that of his confidant; but he was resolved to carry matters to extremities should his claimant still prove refractory to his purpose, which he wished the more to obtain, because it would disgrace his rival in the eye of Isabel. With some of his confidants he set forward on his expedition, reporting, to avoid suspicion, that he was going to make a tour of some of the principal towns in the kingdom.

As soon as this journey was made public, Malcolm, whose servants had long ago returned unsuccessful, both in their search for Edward and his foster-mother, determined to send a faithful servant to trace his motions, and give the earliest account to him of them, if he thought they might lead to any discovery.

As the summer months came on, a pleasant ride to Richard's cottage, through the woods, or on the sands beneath the cliffs on the sea-side, greatly contributed to restore Isabel to her health, though not to her former spirits. Without Edward the Castle appeared quite dull to her. Before his coming she thought as a child, gay at any little happy event, and as sorrowful at any thing unfortunate; but this lasted not a moment. Vivacity was
then

then a trait in her character, but now it was quite different. Since she had seen Edward, her ideas had totally changed from the gay thoughts of a child, to the graver ones of a woman ; the things that delighted her formerly, had no longer power to please. She would sit at her window, and look upon the sun setting in the ocean which bounded the prospect that Edward and herself had frequently observed with delight, and in that posture think on the hardships he might at that moment be suffering.

CHAP. X.

“ When two black clouds with Heav’n’s artillery fraught,
“ Come rattling on.”

MILTON;

ABOUT three weeks after the departure of Macmillan, towards the close of evening, the servant that had been sent to trace his journey, rode up to the Castle-gate, covered with dust, and panting with fatigue, and desired to be shewn immediately

diately to Malcolm. As soon as he entered the library where his master was sitting, the servants collected in the gallery leading to the door, waiting to hear the issue of his mission; all of them desiring the return of Edward.

The entrance of Bertram roused Malcolm from a reverie he had been indulging; and perceiving who it was that broke in so abruptly upon him, he anxiously enquired how he had succeeded.

“Succeeded, my Lord!—better than I expected. The young Knight is at my heels, and sent me on before to apprise you of his coming.”

“Thanks to the Almighty that has
thus

thus heard and granted my petition. But lead me to him, Bertram; I wish to embrace the long-lost youth, now dearer to me than ever."

"He is waiting at Richard's cottage till he receives some account how things go on here, and to make himself appear in a decent trim; for we have travelled day and night through thick and thin to get home again."

"Hasten to him then," returned Malcolm, "and bring him here without delay, while I impart these good tidings to Isabel, and prepare her to meet him."

Bertram staid not to be bid twice, but instantly departed for the cottage. When
he

he came out of the room, his fellow-servants asked him where their young master was; but he staid only to tell them he was safe. This was sufficient, and they crowded round the gate to await his arrival.

In the meantime the Baron entered the apartment of Isabel, who was musing in the same melancholy posture above mentioned.

“My dearest child,” said Malcolm with transport, “prepare to receive the most agreeable tidings that could be brought you at this time.”

“Speak immediately, and satisfy my
curiosity ;

curiosity; I assure you I can bear the height of happiness and joy without the least preface. Is Edward arrived?"

Malcolm, who saw the cruelty of tantalizing her impatience any longer, answered that he was indeed within a few miles of the Castle, and would soon make his appearance.

"Oh then let me hasten, and be the first to congratulate him on his happy escape! His absence has only made him doubly dear to my poor aching heart!"

Having exclaimed, rather than spoken these words, she hurried along her aged parent, whose happiness made him bound

as

as if he had been twenty years younger, towards the gateway, to meet the object of her fond meditations. They had reached the head of the grand staircase when they were surprised by the loud shouts of the domestics, that intimated the return of Edward. Isabel could scarce support herself to the hall, when she burst from her father, and fainted in the arms of her raptured lover. By proper remedies she was quickly restored to life and happiness. The rest of the evening was passed with the greatest delight between all parties, which was heightened by the reflection of the past danger and the present joys. But Edward, exhausted with fatigue, retired early to take the repose he so much needed.

On

On the following day, when the first delirium of joy had passed, Malcolm and his daughter expressed a desire to have their curiosity satisfied with respect to the adventures he must have passed through, and the reason of his late mysterious absence.

“I shall be happy to do so,” said Edward, “as I wish you, after you have heard them, to consider with me upon what measures I ought to pursue. You must already have guessed that I have been indebted for my lodging to Macmillan, whose vengeance at my escape it is now my part to avoid. I will tell you how Bertram joined me, in the course of my relation.”

He

He then related the circumstances with which the reader is already acquainted, till the conclusion of his visit from Rufus. He then proceeded.

“ A few days after his visit, Macmillan entered my apartment.

‘ I come,’ said he, ‘ to make you the same offer as my servant has already made to no purpose. By signing this agreement you will rid me of your hated sight; if you will not comply, you may apprehend the worst consequences from my anger. Compliance is liberty—refusal is death.’

“ I repeated to him the same words I used to Rufus. He was greatly enraged;
and

and having given me twelve hours to reflect on his proposal, he left the room. It was then at noon, and I shuddered to think what would be my fate at midnight; for I was determined to die rather than acknowledge myself an impostor.

“At the appointed time Macmillan returned. When he had heard my refusal, he retired, leaving me to wonder at his conduct, for I had expected instant assassination. But in a few minutes the villain again entered with four masked ruffians, who by his order conveyed me from the turret, wholly resigned to the worst that could happen.

“The remembrance of this Castle, and of you”—(here he cast a look at Isabel, which

which she could not misunderstand, but received it with a blush) — “ was the only thing that made me wish for life, and rendered me for a moment miserable. Reflection, however, soon convinced me that I should resign myself to the ordinance of God, whose justice, I could not refrain from indulging the hope, would never permit the guilty man to triumph. These thoughts rapidly floated through my brain as I was being conducted I knew not whither.

“ From the long time we continued descending, I judged that I was going into the bowels of the earth, there to receive my fate. I was convinced I was right when we came to a long passage hewn out of the rock on which the Castle was built,

built, at the extremity of which a portcullis was raised, and I was led into a dungeon, or rather vault, that was to witness my death. Having let down the portcullis, so as to close the entrance, I was left to meditate on the fate that awaited me.

“ After laying upon the damp ground for about an hour, almost in a state of stupefaction, I was roused from my lethargy by the sound of voices that appeared to proceed from that part of the dungeon directly above me. After listening with great attention, I heard the voice of Rufus apparently in contention with another person, whom I soon knew to be Macmillan, and which proceeded, as I overheard, from the discontent of

Rufus

Rufus concerning the smallness of the reward he was to receive for perpetrating my murder. You may guess my sensations.

“ At length they retired to settle their dispute in some other place, for fear of my overhearing their voices. When I had heard their footsteps die away, I quickly rose to endeavour to find some outlet the way I had heard them talking, for I was convinced there was some subterranean passage into the dungeon, that communicated with some part of the Castle. But my search was fruitless. I found, indeed, what I supposed to be an outlet; but it was so secured on the outside, that I gave up all hopes of escaping that way. However, I resolved

to be upon my guard, for I was convinced my destruction was fixed on.

“ I was again alarmed with the sound of footsteps that approached softly along the passage. Having stepped on one side to let the person enter quietly, according to the plan I had settled for effecting my escape, I heard him cautiously remove the bolts, and the reflection of a lamp burst through the opening, but which was unable to pierce the gloom in which I was concealed ; at the same time I perceived a person descending into the vault.

“ As he approached me, I rushed forward with violence, and seizing him by the throat, threw him to the ground. Despair added vigour to my resolution.

I snatched

I snatched his sword from his side, and taking up the lamp, I flew through the aperture, closely pursued by the diabolical Rufus. A turning to the left hand presented itself, which branched out into several passages. Down one of these I rushed, unconscious of what I was doing, and had the satisfaction to find I was not pursued by Rufus, who I thought had mistaken the one I had entered. But what was my alarm when, having arrived at the end of it, I found all these passages again united in one, and saw my enemy at a short distance before me, continuing his pursuit of me. He was armed with a dagger, and the only means of escape that were left me, were by attacking him without delay. Unperceived, therefore, I drew near him, and with one stroke

plunged his guilty soul into eternity. I staid not a moment, fearing lest his absence might be wondered at by Macmillan, and the cause of it discovered. This was needless ; for having ascended a flight of steps, the only way that I could pursue, at the top of them stood my wretched uncle, holding the door of his chamber in his hand, no doubt awaiting the return of his murderous associate.

“ It was too late to retreat. I advanced, holding the naked cutlass in my right hand, the lamp in the other, and, besides this, besprinkled with the blood of the villain Rufus. Such an unexpected and terrific appearance might have appalled any heart, much more so the heart of a guilty man. Conscience immediately
conjured

conjured me up in his imagination to be the spirit of his brother. He rushed shrieking into his chamber, and almost immediately fell into convulsions.

“ Amid the general confusion this circumstance produced, I escaped into the outer court, and, favoured by the darkness of the night, found means of climbing over a ruinous part of the wall, which also choked up the moat sufficiently to render a passage across it easy.

“ By daybreak I had reached a village at a tolerable distance, where I procured a horse, and by evening had reached a plain of amazing extent, that stretched on every side as far as the eye could reach, when the heavy clouds that began to

thicken in the sky, portended an approaching storm. Thick drops of rain began to fall, which soon increased into a torrent of hail, while the pale lightning faintly gleamed in the horizon. I now looked round for a shelter, but saw nothing except a heap of ruins at some distance before me. Having pushed my tired animal up to it, I entered what appeared to me an old Abbey falling to decay.

“ Placing my horse beneath the covering of a mossy fragment, I sought a safer and more effectual shelter; for by this time the old ruins began to totter at the rattling peals of thunder that burst over my head. Having gained a gallery that seemed more firm than any other
part

part of the fabric, I proceeded cautiously along, lighted only by the incessant flashes of the vivid lightning. But ere long I was alarmed by the sound of footsteps, that appeared to come from the same part as I had already quitted. The idea that I was pursued immediately entered into my mind, but I resolved not tamely to surrender myself up again.

“ Before they had come near, I had hid myself in a dark niche, that perhaps was once filled by a saint, the tutelar deity of the Abbey. From this place I saw a man advancing unarmed, but he passed by without perceiving me. Curious to know whether he was an inhabitant of the pile, or merely driven here by the violence of the storm, to seek shelter like myself, I followed him at some distance,

sufficiently screened from his observation by the darkness that surrounded me. Being almost close to him, I happened to stumble over a fragment that lay in my way, which induced him to turn back to examine into the cause of his terror. A flash of lightning discovered me to him, when, to my extreme joy, I recognised my friend Bertram; and at the same time the old man, almost frantic, called upon me by name, and repeatedly embraced me, asking how I had made my escape.

“ Having satisfied his curiosity on this head, he told me that he had by your directions followed Macmillan to the Castle on the heath, and was returning to acquaint you of it.

“ The

“ The storm being now spent, we set forward on our journey. Bertram advised me to leave the direct road, as most likely we should be pursued that way ; we therefore directed our course towards Edinburgh, where I hoped I might be able to gain some intelligence of Gertrude. When there, I renewed my former enquiries, but in vain. Finding it to no purpose to remain there longer, we once more set out, and, thanks to the Almighty, have arrived at this long-looked-for and blissful mansion.”

Having finished his relation, his hearers expressed their detestation of Macmillan's villany ; but when he produced the manuscript he had discovered in his prison, that related to the fate of Donalbain,

their horror against the double fratricide was increased, and their admiration at the wonderful deliverance of Edward.

Bertram was also called in to receive his share of praise, which his exertions certainly merited. Malcolm tendered him a purse of money, which he desired him to accept as a proof of his esteem for him.

“ God forbid,” replied the old domestic, “ that I should be rewarded for obtaining to myself the greatest happiness I ever could partake of. I see my old master once more happy, and a smile play upon my pretty Lady’s cheek, that more than sufficiently reward my poor endeavours.”

Malcolm

Malcolm pressed him no further, but dismissed him with an assurance that he would think of a reward more congenial to his wishes.

Malcolm told Edward he would reflect upon his narrative, and give him his opinion upon it on the following day. Edward thanked him, and retired.

END OF VOL. I.



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